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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MATERIALISM: SOME MORE PROBLEMS

by

Neil March

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Materialism: Some More Problems submitted by Neil March in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis begins with a brief summary of the philosophical position known as central state materialism. The thesis is concerned to defend central state materialism against a line of attack which has become popular in recent years. This general line of attack is based on the assumption that materialism cannot be correct because it is possible that one's body could be in just the physiological state that it is when one has a psychological experience, and yet for no such experience to occur.

Various elements involved in the line of attack against materialism have been offered by K. Campbell, R. Kirk, S. Kripke and T. Nagel. The relevant contributions of these philosophers are critically considered with regards to their relationship to the central line of attack against materialism.

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The theory of mind which has received the most attention from philosophers over the last decade or so is a form of materialism known as Central State Materialism or the Identity Theory of Mind and Brain. My concern in this thesis will be with a family of criticisms which have been brought against this materialist theory of mind. I shall elaborate, discuss and evaluate this group of criticisms. Before this, however, it is necessary to become clear as to the content of Central State Materialism and upon what grounds the theory is based. In the first part of the introduction I shall attend to this task. The second part of the introduction will be a very general sketch of the arguments against the central state theory that I am interested in dealing with.

Central State Materialism

In general terms, Central State Materialism is based on the conviction that human beings are physical objects and only physical objects. The theory is thus immediately distinguishable from certain traditional forms of dualist theory according to which men are composite beings: one part of man's nature being physical the other being non-physical or spiritual. Central State Materialism is, of course, not the only theory in which humans are considered as being entirely physical. Behaviorism, for example, is a popular theory which also holds such a view.

Central State Materialism differs from behaviorism in that, among other things, while the behaviorist is wont to deny that a human's mind is a thing, the central state materialist is not. The theory of central state materialism asserts that indeed the mind is a thing; the theory denies only that it is a non-physical thing. By affirming the existence of minds but denying that they are non-physical in nature the central state materialist comes to be an identity theorist: he identifies the mind with a part of one's physical body, usually the brain or central nervous system (or some process which takes place in these parts of the body.)

The identity claim made by the central state materialist has been expressed in various terms. J.J.C. Smart made the claim that, "sensations are brain processes...(they are) nothing over and above brain processes."[1] David K. Lewis has stated that, "every experience is identical with some physical state. Specifically, with some neurochemical state."[2] Brian Medlin has said that, "states of mind are physical conditions. I think also that in particular we have good reason to believe that the causal states in question are states of the central nervous system."[3] In short, the materialist can follow D. M. Armstrong in saying, "the mind is simply the brain."[4]

A couple a brief points must be made regarding the identity claim made by the central state materialist. It needs to be

recognized that when the identity theorist states that sensations (or whatever) are identical with brain processes he is not claiming: a) that this is an analytic truth, or b) that what we mean by, say, "sensation" is synonomous with the expression "brain process". What he is claiming is that, as a matter of empirical fact, we will find, through scientific discovery, that sensations are brain processes. Even if the terms identified do not share the same meaning or sense, they share the same reference. With regard to the first point, D. M. Armstrong has said,[5]

> If there is anything certain in philosophy, it is certain that 'the mind is the brain' is not a logically necessary truth. When Aristotle said that the brain was nothing but an organ for keeping the body cool, he was certainly not guilty of denying a necessary truth. His mistake was an empirical one.

With regard to the second point, J.J.C. Smart has said that the identity theory,[6]

> is not the thesis that, for example, "afterimage" or "ache" means the same as "brain process of sort X"... It is that, in so far as "afterimage" or "ache" is a report of a process, it is a report of a process that <u>happens to be</u> a brain process. It follows that the thesis does not claim that sensation statements can be translated into statements about brain processes.

Thus, the identity theorist concedes that mental or psychological descriptions differ from physical ones and that this difference is a difference in meaning. Nonetheless, the materialist claims that whatever is described in psychological terms can also be described in solely physical terms. On this account, the things we describe psychologically are no more than physical

things. The fact that some objects or states of affairs can be described in psychological terms is not held to imply that the things so described are other than physical.

It can be seen then that there are two issues at stake for the identity theory. First, there is an empirical, scientific issue: namely, whether science will discover that sensations are identical with brain processes. Second, there is the philosophical issue, viz. whether it makes sense to claim that empirical enquiry will or could reveal that sensations, say, are nothing but brain processes. As Richard Rorty has said, the identity theorist is one who "thinks it is sensible to assert that empirical enquiry will discover that sensations...are identical with certain brain processes."[7] It is the latter issue, the philosophical issue, with which my thesis shall be primarily concerned.

Immediately following a basic understanding of the central state materialist's position, a problem comes to mind. A brief examination of this problem will provide an opportunity to shed light on some of the areas of the identity theory which are to be questioned later in this thesis.

The problem to be discussed arises from the fact that the mind and the brain are held to be identical; thus, when we are aware of our mental states what we are aware of must in fact be physical states - states of our brain. The problem here is that we are not aware of these mental states <u>as</u> states of the brain

(or as any physical state). The materialist is thus faced with the problem of giving an analysis of the mental which is compatible with physicalism in the face of the ostensible fact that when we are aware of the mental, we are not aware of it as being physical in nature. Indeed, it needs mention that one form of materialism, "eliminative" materialism as suggested by, say, Feyerabend and Rorty, claims that the existence of just such a problem should be sufficient to make the central state materialist realize that his view is not compatible with any statements which would imply the existence of a mind. A physicalist, on such a view, would be committed to talk of the physical workings of the central nervous system, the mental vocabulary being tossed aside entirely. At this point in the discussion of central state materialism, it does not seem necessary for the materialist to make such a move. Indeed, it is to a great extent the reasoning behind not going the way of the eliminative materialist which defines the central state theory that I shall be concerned with.

One of the major reasons why the central state materialist does not feel that he must follow the eliminative materialist is his belief in the theory of topic or ontic neutrality in conjunction with appeals to ontological economy. A topic neutral description is one which begs no questions as to what sort of thing a particular phenomenon is. Related to the point at hand, it may be said that a topic neutral description of the mind is one which

implies neither that the mind is physical nor that it is non-physical. Holding that a description of the mind might be topic neutral, the materialist then makes use of an application of Occam's razor, the appeal to ontological economy, to claim that we cannot assert that mental conditions are non-physical unless there is some good reason for doing so. Without such a reason, we should consider the mind as being physical in nature.

It is clear then how the problem raised earlier, namely, that one has some sort of "direct awareness" of mental states which is not an awareness of the states as being physical, is to be handled by the materialist. He must hold that being aware of a pain but not being aware of it as a physical state does not imply that being in pain is not, in fact, a physical state. Accordingly, Brian Medlin claims that the problem which results is dependent upon "a confusion of conceptual and ontological questions."[8] He writes,

> In this case the confusion produces, and is sustained by, the conviction that a man can be directly aware of something and aware of it as something non-physical. But how could <u>this</u> be given in direct awareness? It is true that my pain may produce in me not only the belief that I am in pain, but also the unalterable conviction that my pain is something non-physical. But how would this show that my pain <u>is</u> something non-physical:... (It would be) as though the mere fact that one was directly aware of something showed that what one was aware of could not be anything physical. But that view is mere dogma.

Medlin is arguing here, as he must, that the fact that one is directly aware of an X gives no support to the claim that

that X is non-physical; neither, of course, does the phenomenon of direct awareness support the claim that the X in question is physical in nature. The direct awareness of our mental states, if what Medlin says is correct, is entirely topic neutral in nature. If this is so, then the fact that our awareness is not an awareness of something as physical is no hindrance to the physicalist cause.

It appears then initially plausible to suppose that the central state materialist is able to account for various common sense objections to his theory via the topic neutral defence. The use of this concept of ontic neutrality, however, also finds application in another area. The materialist appears to be in need of giving some sort of analysis of the mind. He claims that the mind is the brain and yet also admits that the two terms, while having the same reference, do not have the same meaning. Thus, for his theory to attain any degree of plausibility, the materialist must be able to tell us what the term "mind" means without using "brain" or any other such word in the analysis. The use of any such term would indicate some sort of logical connection between the terms; the materialist explicitly denies that this is the case. Not only must he give such an analysis but he must give one which is topic neutral in nature. This is because it does not seem that an analysis which would imply that the mind is physical is to be found, and if the analysis implied that the mind was non-physical then the

materialist enterprise would be dashed before being begun.

At this point the materialist calls upon the causal theory of mind to supply his analysis of the mental. The causal theory provides both an independent analysis of the mind - the mind is the cause of behavior - and an analysis which is topic neutral in the required sense. The conceptual analysis of the mental leads to a cause within man; however, it leaves open what kind of thing this cause might be.

The causal theory of mind is based on the conviction that there is a conceptual connection between mind and behavior; that is, it is the differences in behavior between man and, say, trees that lead one to believe that men have minds while trees do not. The mind is, as it were, postulated to account for the differences between man and other existing things - a difference which is manifested in behavior. The causal theory thus agrees with, say, behaviorism in recognizing the connection between mind and behavior. It differs from behaviorism however, in that the mind, is postulated as the cause of the behavior rather than being identified with the behavior itself. The mind is thus viewed as something "inner" and separate from the behavior; it is the cause of the behavior.

The causal theory claims that mental states are typically states with a causal role in disposing men to certain types of behavior; the causal theory does not, however, in itself, suggest what the nature of these inner causes might be. The task of

determining what the inner cause is, is relegated to the domain of the sciences. It is consistent with the causal theory that the cause could be either physical or non-physical, a soul, a gaseous vapour, or part of the central nervous system. Given that the latter is almost universally accepted as that part of our body which matters most to behavior, it is this which the central state materialist chooses to identify with the mind. The mind turns out to be the brain; a brain which, it must be pointed out, has no non-physical properties.

The causal theory is most convenient for the materialist. Not only does it provide a topic neutral analysis of the mental independent of talk about brains - Armstrong, for example, claims that the concept of a mental state is the concept of a "state of the person apt for bringing about a certain sort of behavior" [9] - but its presumed truth together with the assumption of physical determinism, that all biological movement is explicable in physico-chemical terms, immediately implies the truth of materialism. That is, if states of mind are causes of behavior (which is movement), and all causes of biological movement are physical causes, then states of mind must be physical conditions.[10] Of course, even assuming the truth of the causal theory of mind, such an argument may not be sound, given that physical determinism is not obviously true; however, at least the argument establishes that to the extent that physical determinism is plausible, materialism is also plausible and the reason behind this

plausibility is the causal theory of mind.

Another argument purporting to establish the identity theory, and one which is based on the causal theory of mind, is presented by David Lewis.[11] He argues,

> The definitive characteristic of any (sort of) experience as such is its causal role, its syndrome of most typical causes and effects. But we materialists believe that these causal roles which belong by analytic necessity to experiences belong in fact to certain physical states. Since those physical states possess the definitive characteristics of experience, they must be the experiences.

Here the materialist hypothesis that the causes of behavior are physical is combined with the causal theory that the mental is defined by its causal role, to yield the conclusion that experience, the mental, must be physical.

Despite the central role that the causal theory of mind can be seen to play in establishing the central state theory, it should be pointed out that materialism, although it may suffer a great setback, would not be disproven even if the causal theory were found to be false. It could still be that materialism is true even if the causal theory is false or grossly inadaquate as an analysis of the mental. The fact that materialists may have chosen the wrong theory to use as an analysis of the mental does not imply that there may not be some other theory which is both true and compatible with materialism.

Another area of the materialist theory, to be developed more thoroughly later, needs brief mention. The materialist, in claiming as he does that his identity statements are contingent rather than necessary in nature, attempts to find support for

the plausibility of his view by drawing an analogy with the theoretical identities found in the sciences. In the sciences, identity claims such as "lightning is electrical discharge" or "the gene is the DNA molecule" are frequently found. The central state materialist's claim is that his identity statement concerning mind and body is like these statements. On the surface, at least, the claim seems plausible. Both types of statements are supposedly discovered empirically and their identity is of a contingent rather than necessary nature. This is so at least to the extent that neither type of statement is advanced on the basis of the meaning of the terms involved.

By making such an analogy with statements in the sciences, the identity theorist hopes to make his thesis more plausible and understandable. The thesis becomes more plausible because identity statements of an analogous type are to be found treated with respect in the sciences. Further, although the materialist identity statement is initially hard to grasp, comparison with the scientific identity statements should result in an increase in understanding. If one understands what is meant by "lightning is electrical discharge", then there should be no reason why one could not, in principle, understand "the mind is the brain". We shall find however, that the analogy between the materialist's and the scientist's claims plays a much more central role in the materialist thesis than may be realized here.

Arguments Against Central State Materialism

The summary view of the materialist position being completed, I now offer a brief look at how this paper is going to be concerned with the materialist doctrine. I propose, in the body of the thesis, to examine the criticisms that four philosophers have brought against the materialist position. This examination will involve both exposition and evaluation in an attempt to see how the materialist theory fares in the light of such critiques as have recently dominated much of the literature on the mind-body problem. The critiques I shall primarily be concerned with are, in order of presentation, those made by Keith Campbell in Body and Mind,[12] Robert Kirk in "Sentience and Behavior",[13] Saul Kripke in "Naming and Necessity",[14] and Thomas Nagel in "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?".[15]

These four works were selected for three main reasons. First, each of the arguments is potentially a refutation of materialism. Secondly, they all deal (although some only by implication) with issues this writer considers central to the materialist doctrine, ie. topic neutrality, the causal theory of mind, and consciousness. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, these critiques constitute a loosely knit family of arguments. None of the arguments shows exactly what any of the others purport to, nor do any of them use exactly the same method of attempting to deduce their various conclusions; nonetheless, there is a definite link between the arguments. Though many of the ties between the articles will have

to wait for the arguments to develop before becoming apparent, one of the primary ways in which the relationships can be viewed demands immediate attention. I shall refer to the intuition which all four arguments share, and to some extent depend upon, as the Cartesian assumption or the Cartesian intuition. I explain this assumption directly.

The works of Rene Descartes, the arch-dualist, contain a number of attempted proofs for the thesis that the mind is distinct from the body, a thesis diametrically opposed to that of the materialist. One of Descartes' more persuasive arguments, yet one I believe to be fallacious,[16] is based on the simple premise that since I can conceive of (clearly and distinctly perceive) the independent existence of my mind, it is indeed distinct from my body.[17] The articles to be considered in this thesis rely heavily on a version of just such a premise, the difference being that in the hands of the critics of materialism the premise becomes inverted. Rather than attempting to establish the existence of a mind distinct from one's body on the basis of our ability to so conceive it, these arguments depend upon the inverse intuition. They argue that one can conceive of one's body being in just the state that it now is and doing just what it is now doing, both overtly and, say, neurologically, with complete physical causation of all behavior. Further, one can conceive of one's body being in this state without there being any mental experiences or states which are experienced. The Cartesian assumption may thus be stated as follows:

> It is possible that one's body could be in just the physiological state that it is when one has a psychological experience, and yet for no such experience to occur.

If this assumption can be maintained, so the argument goes, then materialism cannot be correct.[18] The reasons for concluding materialism to be incorrect vary. For example, Kirk concludes that this sort of consideration conflicts with the causal analysis of the mental because of the materialist claim that mental experiences are entailed by the presence of the complex physical causes. Keith Campbell argues that this Cartesian consideration, as I have called it, if correct, establishes the existence of phenomenal properties which are not subject to topic neutral analysis and as such amount to a disproof of materialism. Saul Kripke uses the same consideration attempting to show its incompatibility with the identity claims made by the materialist, at least to the extent that they are based on an analogy with the physical sciences. Thomas Nagel's use of the Cartesian assumption leads him to investigate the reasons for the incompatibility of the premise and the identity theory.

The same Cartesian intuition furter relates the arguments in the following way. Both Campbell and Kirk try to present a counter-example to the materialist thesis in the form of a "man" who incorporates the idea expressed in the Cartesian assumption. He is one who is as physically complex as normal man but who lacks the appropriate mental life. Saul Kripke's argument may be viewed as something of a formalization of just

such possibilities. Nagel's argument, on the other hand, is related to those of Kirk and Campbell via the fact that both the latter find the notion of awareness to be incompatible with the materialist doctrine due to the effect of the Cartesian assumption. Nagel also argues that consciousness or awareness suffers on the materialist account due to our inability to understand how such phenomena could be physical in nature.

A brief outline of the thesis which follows will serve to show how the various arguments are related in yet another way.

As was mentioned above, Campbell and Kirk propose counter examples to the materialist thesis in the form of a being who is the embodiment of what I have termed the Cartesian assumption. I shall argue that individually both of these proposed counter examples are inadequate. However, I maintain that they can be conjoined so as to present what might amount to a refutation of the materialist position. The eventual success of the argument as is established by combining the critiques of Kirk and Campbell, however, depends upon the outcome of a matter that is not considered by either of them. This is the matter of whether the materialist identity can be considered analogous to scientific identity statements such as "lightning is electrical discharge". I shall argue that whether the critiques by Kirk and Campbell amount to a refutation of materialism depends upon the answer to this question.

This is the point at which Kripke and Nagel enter center stage. Both of these philosophers argue that the identity theorist's claim of analogy with the sciences will not do. There are, argue Kripke and Nagel, significant differences between the two identity statements (the scientific and the materialist) such that materialist reliance upon the scientific analogy is unwarranted. If either Nagel or Kripke is correct and the materialist cannot make use of the scientific identities, then the arguments proposed by the Kirk-Campbell combination hold and may be regarded as a refutation of central state materialism (or at least as showing there to be gross inadequacies in the theory). Later I will argue that neither Kripke nor Nagel presents adaquate argument for this conclusion. Thus it will have been shown that the approach to a critique of materialism offered by the combination of these four articles is not successful.

Footnotes to the Introduction

1. Smart, J.J.C., "Sensations and Brain Processes" in Rosenthal (Ed.), Materialism and the Mind-Body Problem, p. 56

2. Lewis, D.K., "An Argument for the Identity Theory", in Rosenthal (Ed) Materialism and the Mind-Body Problem, p. 162

3. Medlin, B., "Ryle and the Mechanical Hypothesis", in Presley (Ed.) The Identity Theory of Mind, 1967, p. 96

4. Armstrong, D.M., A Materialist Theory of Mind, 1971, p. 73

5. Ibid., p. 77

6. Smart, op cit., p. 56

7. Rorty, R., "Mind-Brain Identity, Privacy, and Catagories", Review of Metaphysics, No. 18, p.24

8. Medlin, B., op cit., p. 101

9. Armstrong, D.M., op cit., p. 82

10. Medlin, B., op cit., p. 96

11. Lewis, D.K., op cit., p. 163

12. Campbell, K., Body and Mind, Anchor, 1970

13. Kirk, R., "Sentience and Behavior", Mind, Vol. 83, No. 329, Jan. 1974, pp.43-60

14. Kripke, S., "Naming and Necessity" in Semantics of Natural Language, Eds. Harman and Davidson, pp. 253-355 (esp. 334-342), 1972.

15. Nagel, T., "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", Philosophical Review, Oct. 1974, pp.435-450.

16. The reason I am not convinced by Descartes' argument is that it seems that he never adaquately answered the telling objection raised by Arnauld. In Meditation II, Descartes is not sure whether body exists or not, yet he is sure that he exists as a thinking thing; the conclusion, as drawn by Arnauld in his

set of objections to the Meditation is, "Hence I, who doubt and think, am not a body" (Philosophical Works of Descartes, Haldane and Ross, Vol. II, p. 80., hereafter HR). Arnauld notes however, that, "the fact that I doubt about body or deny that body exists, does not bring it about that no body exists" and hence, "The problem is: how it follows from the fact that one is unaware that anything else (except the fact of being a thinking thing) belongs to one's essence, that nothing else really belongs to one's essence." (HR, II, P. 81)

In Meditation II, Descartes considers the body and bodily attributes apart from the mind and modes of thinking. He notes that thought alone cannot be separated from him. He does not however, in Meditation II, conclude that his essence or nature is to think; nor does he dismiss the possibility that body is an essential part of him. He says,"perhaps it is true that these same things which I supposed were non-existent because they were unknown to me, are not really different from the self which I know. I am not sure about this." (HR, I, p.152) This means that Descartes' completed doctrine, that he is essentially a thing which thinks, is not presented until Meditation VI, in other words, a time after which God's existence has been proved. Both Arnauld and Descartes are quite aware of this; Descartes seems to think that this fact is sufficient to rescue him from the grips of Arnauld's objection. Descartes writes,

> although much exists in me of which I am not yet conscious...yet since that which I do perceive is adequate to allow of my existing with it as my sole possession, I am certain that God could have created me without putting me in possession of those other attributes of which I am unaware. Hence it was that those additional attributes were judged not to belong to the essence of the mind. (HR, II, p. 97)

It will be recalled that the problem raised by Arnauld is, "how it follows, from the fact that one is unaware that anything else (except the fact of being a thinking thing) belongs to one's essence, that nothing else really belongs to one's essence." (HR,II,p.81) Thus the problem Arnauld raises is regarding the adequacy of my perception of myself; that is, could it not be that something else is a part of my essence but that I am not aware of it and could that part not be corporeal. Given that this is the problem raised by the question, Descartes' reply becomes little more than a case of question begging. He states, "since that which I do perceive is adequate to allow of my existing with it as my sole possession, I am certain that God..." His argument would be correct given that premise, but this is just the premise to which Arnauld's question is directed. It is not clear that what I perceive is adequate to allow my existence for it could be, suggests Arnauld, that one does not perceive

all which is essential.

In reading over Descartes' reply to the objection (HR,II, pp.96-97) Descartes' reasoning seems sound. The reason for this however, is that Descartes significantly changes the wording of the question posed by Arnauld. It is changed from "ones being unaware" to "from the fact that I know that nothing belongs to my essence". Arnauld's whole point, of course, is that one does not know this, or at least that it has not been shown that one knows this. In the absence of an adequate reply to Arnauld's objection, Descartes' argument need not be taken too seriously.

17. The argument is expounded at HR, II, p. 59 and 97 as well as being developed through Meditations II and VI.

18. It may be that the phrase "Cartesian intuition" is not a particularly happy one given that the actual consideration employed by the philosophers that I am dealing with is only derivative from Descartes' argument. It may be that some such phrase as "dualist assumption" or "anti-materialist intuition" (or whatever) might be less confusing as well as being more fair to Descartes. In using the phrase "Cartesian intuition" then, it should be kept in mind that I am not trying to sadle Descartes himself with holding such a view. Rather, the phrase simply is a convenient way of denoting the fact that the premise that one's body could be in physiologically the same state as it is now and yet no mental happenings occur is central to the positions of the philosophers that I am dealing with. The reference to Descartes in the phrase merely signifies that such a premise seems to derive from the Cartesian argument for the distinction of mind and body.

It should also be pointed out that the intent of my thesis is not to try to establish that each of the philosophers I deal with use the Cartesian assumption and that this is the reason that their arguments fail. That is, I am not denying the possibility that an argument using such a premise might indeed refute the materialist. I am concerned merely to show that four philosophers whose arguments can be related by way of showing their adherance to such a premise, have been unable to attain their goal of disarming the materialist.

CHAPTER ONE

KEITH CAMPBELL AND THE IMITATION MAN

Introduction

The first anti-materialist argument to be considered is presented by Keith Campbell in his book Body and Mind.[1] There Campbell has presented an argument which, he thinks, "is incompatible with a purely materialist doctrine of the inner, mental causes of behavior." (BM, 110) Campbell's method of argument is to postulate an "imitation man", physiologically as complex as a human man yet lacking a property which man possesses - "awareness by phenomenal property" - a phrase which will be clarified directly. The postulation of this being is an attempt to block the materialist thesis that mental properties can be considered ontically neutral because they can be accounted for by the physiological complexity of man. I shall briefly explain each of the concepts just mentioned while fitting them into Campbell's general line of argument.

Campbell notes that the theory of central state materialism is erected on the causal theory of mind. However, this causal theory of mind, is inadequate to account for what Campbell calls the "phenomenal properties" of mental states. That is, materialism holds that the physico-chemical properties of the brain are the only properties relevant to the role of causing behavior. But Campbell insists that certain brain states have a complexity

beyond their physical complexity, because such brain states are also "awarenesses of phenomenal properties". The mind then, is more than just a field of causes. The causal theory cannot account, on Campbell's view, for the peculiarly mental features of some mental states. Not all of these mental features are causal properties for "there are in addition, characteristics of some mental states which especially concern how those states seem to him who has them." (BM, 104) There are left then the phenomenal properties: the "burning, jabbing, throbbing and aching sorts of pains; the salty, sweet and avocado-like sorts of taste..." (BM,104)

Campbell is, of course, quick to admit that materialism is not automatically refuted even if the causal theory is inadequate. As Campbell puts it, "if any property is ontically neutral, it is of course possible for a material object to have it as a property." (BM,105) That is, if a property is such that the fact of its existence does not entail any ontological facts regarding what sort of thing that property is, then that property is "ontically neutral". Thus, if phenomenal properties are ontically neutral, then the materialist need not worry. If they are ontically neutral there is no conceptual bar to their being either physical or non-physical in nature. Thus, the mind could be an entirely physical object even if mental states possess phenomenal properties, provided that these properties are themselves ontically neutral. Campbell argues that these properties are, however, such that they cannot be regarded as neutral in the

required sense. Campbell first denies that the causal theory of mind is adequate because the phenomenal properties are not accounted for by it. This is followed by the attempt to show that phenomenal properties themselves are not ontically neutral in character.

On the materialist theory, the mind is the brain: there are no non-material properties involved. Now, when I have a pain, I am aware of it as a condition which hurts, I am not aware of it as a firing of neurons or the stimulation of my C fibres or whatever; the pain is, however, the firing of the neurons. Thus, although what I am aware of is a physical process in the brain, I am not aware of it as a physical process in the brain. Thus, concludes Campbell, "to suffer is, on this account, to introspect rather clumsily a process which is itself material."(BM,105) This tactic, that hurtfulness is how C fibre stimulation seems or appears to us, "deals with pain, smell or color apprehended and, relegating it to the catagory of appearance, renders it ontically neutral. But it leaves us with a set of seemings, acts of imperfect apprehension, in which the phenomenal properties are grasped."(BM,106) What bothers Campbell in this regard is the question, "is it possible that things can seem to be in a certain way to a merely material system?"(BM,106-107) What is at stake here is that if things cannot "seem" to a material system, then the materialist cannot appeal to topic neutrality. In other words, the "seemings" would imply a dualism of some sort.

What Campbell is pointing to here by his question is the fact that

men have experiences. A self-developing camera, a material system, does not experience anything; it matters not to the camera whether its shutter is open or closed; for the camera, "the world does not seem to be any sort of place at all." With us it is different. Whether our eyelids are open or closed makes a great difference to how the world seems. It is this difference which is in question when we ask about the ontic neutrality of the awareness of phenomenal properties.

The materialist's usual answer to this type of attack is based on the difference in complexity between man and machine. That is, things can "seem" to man but not to machines not because man is in principle different from machines but only because he is more complex.[2] In this regard, for example, D.M. Armstrong has said

> a man is a physical object, distinguished from other physical objects only by the special complexity of his physical organization and the special complexity of his physical capacities.

Campbell does not find such appeals to complexity convincing. The argument used to support his feeling is based on consideration of an imitation man.

The Imitation Man

The imitation man, Campbell asks us to imagine

> is a being very like us except that instead of feeling a pain when he burns his finger or breaks his toe, he has no locatable sensations at all. He just spontaneously gains a new belief, it just 'pops into his head' that he has burned his finger or broken his toe. (BM, 100)

Further, "the imitation man satisfies the analysis...of, "I am aware

that I have burned by finger." But his pains do not hurt." (BM,101) The imitation man then, is one who has no awareness by phenomenal properties. When he burns his finger, he knows that something is going on in his finger and he knows that there is activity in him by which he knows the fact, but also, like us, he does not know that C fibre activity is involved. Thus, the imitation man is one who "apprehends imperfectly", as we do, but he does not aprehend by suffering, as we do.

The apparent problem for the materialist regarding all this is that since the imitation man is a being just as complex as man, the materialist's appeal to complexity in accounting for human experience would seem to be invalidated. The imitation man is just as physiologically complex as man and yet lacks some human properties. The result then is that something is shown to be lacking from the materialist account, for he "can find no place for the fact that our imperfect apprehension is by phenomenal propery and not by, for example, beliefs just spontaneously arising." (BM, 109)

Without the need to go into much detail I think it is apparent at this point how Campbell's argument uses what I have referred to as the Cartesian premise or intuition: that it seems logically possible for us to be in the same physiological state as we would be when normally experiencing something, and yet experience nothing, or, in other words, for our body to be functioning just as it now is and yet for no mental processes to be occuring.

Campbell embodies this intuition in a creature, an imitation

man, who is just as physiologically complex as us and yet lacks the awareness of phenomenal properties which we, as men, are supposed to possess.

I think that when dealing with Campbell's argument one must be careful not to become bogged down in trying to figure out what seem to inconsistencies in this odd creature, the imitation man. It is tempting, for example, to argue against Campbell that such a man does not present a threat to the materialist because he is not a conceivable entity. Such a charge would be based upon, for instance, Campbell's assertion that this man has pains but that they do not hurt.[3] This state of affairs, it might be argued, is not possible.

It may be that Campbell does make a number of such errors in his presentation. Nonetheless, they are not errors which are central to his critique of the materialist. To dwell upon such errors is to obscure what is of value in Campbell's presentation. Campbell's argument can be amended to read something like this. The materialist accounts for the difference (the fact of experience) between man and, say, a camera, by asserting that man if far more complex than a camera. However, we can imagine a being "who duplicates all of a typical man's acquisition, processing, and retrieval of information, and all his activity, but for whom their are no phenomenal properties." (BM,108) Rather than saying that this being has pains which do not hurt, let us say that he has no pains. Though he has no pains, he has beliefs which just "pop into his head" when he damages himself.

The problem then for materialism is to be able to keep the phenomenal properties ontically neutral in the face of the fact that physiological complexity cannot account for the existence of these properties, that it is by suffering pains and not just by a belief "popping into our heads" that we apprehend a malfunction or an injury.

Unfortunately, as ingenius as the presentation of the imitation man might seem, Campbell's argument will not do.

Problems With the Imitation Man

For Campbell's imitation man to present a counter-example to the materialist view he must be as physiologically complex as man and yet be unable to apprehend "seemings". This sort of imitation man must be distinguished from one who might apprehend by a different sort or different set of seemings than an ordinary man does. That is, it must be the case, for the imitation man to present a counter-example, that things do not seem to him. That two beings might be similarly complex and yet have things seem differently to them is consistent with the materialist claims for ontic neutrality on the basis of physiological complexity. It is due to a lack of realization of this distinction that Campbell's argument fails.

The point can be made in the following way. Neuron firings (or whatever), on the materialist view, appear or seem to us as pain; to the imitation man, similar brain activity does not seem or appear to him as pain; a belief just pops into his head. What

Campbell's argument lacks, however, is any reason for denying that neuron firings appear or seem to the imitation man as beliefs popping into his head - neuron firings appear to him as the onset of a belief. The imitation man, by hypothesis, is a purely material system, yet, according to Campbell, when his hand is damaged causing neurons to fire and alerting this creature to the damage, he is not aware of brain activity as brain activity; he is aware of it as a belief popping into his head. Given Campbell's analysis of the analogous goings on in man, one can only conclude that there is no reason to refrain from saying that neuron firings seem to the imitation man as the onset of these beliefs. If this is the case, then Campbell has done nothing towards establishing his contention that things cannot seem to a purely material system. The imitation man, who by hypothesis is a purely material system, is one to whom things seem.

It may be objected to my critique that beliefs are not phenomenal properties like the stabbing of a pain is. This may, of course, be true, but given the distinction made above, it does nothing to alleviate Campbell's problem. It was there pointed out that what must be established by Campbell is that things cannot seem to a material system. That things may seem differently to one system than to another (in one, say, the seemings are phenomenal properties, in another beliefs) is in no way inconsistent with the aspect of materialism with which Campbell is concerned. The above may constitute a valid objection to the materialist's use of the causal theory of mind (which would require that the physical state entail the mental state) but it is to be noted that Campbell is

not directing his argument against the causal theory; his argument is against the materialist use of complexity to account for the fact that we have experiences while machines and the like do not.

In conclusion it must be said that despite a plausible embodiment of the Cartesian intuition in an imitation man, Campbell's argument lacks the necessary force to do away with the materialist. The thought experiment attempted by Campbell simply does not prove what it purports to. The next chapter will be concerned with a creature not unlike Campbell's man, but one who, it seems, is free from the difficulties found with Campbell's imitation man. To this I now turn.

Footnotes to Chapter One

1. Campbell, K., Body and Mind, Anchor Books, 1970, References to this text are cited in the body of the thesis as (BM,page)
2. Armstrong, D.M., A Materialist Theory of the Mind, 1971
3. see W. Cooper, "Beyond Materialism and Back" in forthcoming Dialogue

CHAPTER TWO

KIRK'S ZOMBIE

Introduction

Robert Kirk, in "Sentience and Behavior"[1], presents an argument which is consistent with the Cartesian intuitions studied earlier and gives a counter-example not unlike, but free from the type of difficulty found in, Keith Campbell's argument. Like Campbell, Kirk presents the example of a man who falsifies "any view according to which statements about sensory experience are analyzable or translatable in 'topic neutral' terms." (SB, 59) Kirk's argument is to show the logical possibility of there being what he refers to as a "Zombie", "an organism indistinguishable from a normal human being in all anatomical, behavioral and other observable respects, yet insentient." (SB, p. 43)

The Story of Dan

The attempt to show the possibility of a Zombie is framed in a story about a human being, Dan, who by stages turns into a Zombie. The first stage, and the stage upon which the others are modelled, has Dan losing his feeling of pain. In going through what might be called normal "pain situations", Dan insists that he feels no pain. Despite this insistence, however, Dan, when in such situations, winces, moans, attempts to nurse the injured part of his body, and so on. In short, Dan's behavior is totally consistent with that of someone who was in pain. Dan explains the inconsistency between his obviously pain oriented behavior and

his claim that he in fact feels no pain in the following way. First, he is genuinely astonished both that he feels no pain in a given pain situation and that he was nevertheless behaving in the way he was. Secondly, he says that it seemed to him that the series of motions which constituted his pain behavior had been a series of complicated involuntary twitches; happenings over which he had no control.

The situation we are asked to imagine is thus one where a human being loses his sensation of pain although his behavior remains indistinguishable from a person who did feel pain. The story of Dan continues with his losing, in six month intervals, his sense of smell, taste, sight, and hearing. All the while his behavior regarding these senses remains the same as always. For instance, he hears himself describing the flavour of an apple even when he is keenly aware of the absense of any corresponding experience. After losing his sight he "wakes one morning and with a prodigious effort (as it seems) manages to groan: 'I've gone blind; can't see a thing.' Yet he prepares to go to work as usual, with only effortful complaints about having gone blind." (SB, 48) When all of Dan's sensory links with the outside world have been cut away, he has become a Zombie, although acting in no way different from a normal human, it really is "silent and dark within."

It is important to this story's point of rejecting materialism that "when Dan has, putatively, reached the stage of Zombiehood, his neural activity will be indistinguishable from that of a normal human being." (SB, 51) The situation is thus that we

have the story of a creature who both behaves in a way indistinguishable from a human and whose brain and central nervous system function indistinguishably from those of a human and yet who lacks sentience; he has no sensory experience.

Materialism and the Zombie

The Zombie, as described above, seems to run counter to materialist theory in the following way. Materialists, such as Armstrong and Lewis, deal with experience via a causal analysis. As Kirk puts it, according to such a causal analysis,

> if a process now going on in some individual's brain has the causal role ascribed to say, pain, it follows logically that the individual is in pain...himself. (SB, 52)

Materialism requires, as was noted earlier, a two step process. First, an analysis of mental concepts is proposed, and in the materialist case such concepts are given a causal analysis. The causal analysis neither entails nor excludes materialism for it remains a possibility that the cause of behavior could be either physical or non-physical. The materialist's second step is to identify the inner states with physico-chemical states of the brain. It is this contingent identification which yields central state materialism.

Kirk cuts through materialism by exemplifying the claim that it is possible for the physical causes of behavior to occur without mental phenomena occurring. The brain can be functioning as always without any experience occurring. If this is a possibility, and it must be remembered that Kirk's argument depends only upon

logical possibility, not plausibility, then the conclusion that Kirk is entitled to draw, it would seem, is that the materialist use of topic neutrality, in this case the causal analysis, is radically inadequate as an element in his philosophy of mind. As such, to the extent that materialism depends upon the causal analysis, it is a false answer to the mind-body problem.

Understanding the workings of Kirk's argument may be facilitated if it is put into the following form:

1. The materialist attempts to deal with experience via a topic neutral, in this case causal analysis such that, of necessity, an experience occupies a certain causal role.
2. Since the materialist argues that all such causes are physical, then man can be analyzed in wholly physical terms.
3. A zombie is one who has the same physical structures as man but has no experiences of the relevant kind.
4. If zombies are logically possible, and it is argued that they are, then it is possible that one should have the physical structure of man yet be lacking one property of being man, namely, being sentient.
5. Men are sentient.
6. Therefore, man is not totally explained by the materialist analysis, or, the materialist analysis leaves something out in its analysis of man.

At this point, I should like to consider what may be thought a quite obvious materialist reply to an argument of the type presented by Kirk. The materialist[2] distinguishes "being in pain"

from "being aware that one is in pain" such that it is sensible, on the materialist view, to claim that one was in pain though one was not aware of it. The basis for such a distinction is roughly the fact that one brain state is identified with "pain" while another brain state, one which "scans" the other brain states to determine if stimulation is occurring, is identified with the awareness. The materialist argues that since the scanning process is mechanical it is therefore fallible, that is, there is always the chance of something going wrong with the mechanical scanning process. If something did go wrong, then it would be possible that the "scanning" brain state could incorrectly scan the stimulation of the "pain" brain state. Such a case would be one of being in pain though not being aware of it.

It might be thought that given this sort of model, the materialist is able to encompass the possibility of zombies within his theory. That is, since the materialist allows that one can be in pain without being aware of the pain, he can certainly allow that there may be "people" who, although they feel no pain, have the same physical structure as those who do. These would be people who, although sometimes in pain, are never aware of the pain; they are people who suffer from some sort of mechanical defect of just the sort that the materialist admits is possible.

Such a reply is inadequate. It would seem that if being in pain and being aware of pain are to be distinguished as the materialist requires, and if all mental processes are physical

processes, as the materialist insists, then being in pain and being aware of the pain must themselves be distinct physical processes. If these are distinct physical processes, and if the zombie, by hypothesis, has the same physical (neural) structure as a human, then it would seem that the materialist distinction does not save him. The zombie is not one who has the physical process "being in pain" but lack the process "being aware of pain"; rather, he is one who, just as a normal human, has physical processes corresponding to both. The problem then for the materialist is that the zombie has physical processes corresponding to "being aware of pain" and yet he, in fact, is not aware of the pain (at least not in the required way, ie. he feels no pain). It seem then that the line of reasoning based on the materialist inspired distinction will not do as a reply to the zombie type argument.

Reflecting on his argument for rejecting the causal analysis Kirk says,

> if the argument is sound, then the causal analysis fails to provide a basis for rejecting the logical possibility of Zombies because it fails to take account of some of the phenomena necessarily involved in sentience. (SB, 55)

This, feels Kirk, is grounds enough for regarding materialism as false. It is to be noted that Kirk does present subsidiary argument to support the intuition that zombies are logically possible. However, as I am not going to question the intuition, these need not be of concern. As was the case when dealing with Campbell, I shall accept the possibility of such creatures and thus accept the conclusion that the causal analysis is not an adequate

analysis of mind. In effect then, I grant Kirk his argument. What I do not feel can be so hastily granted is his conclusion that materialism, because of these considerations, is false.

A Critical Look at Kirk's Argument

There are a couple of considerations which I should like to present in regard to Kirk's argument. First, I shall consider Kirk's conclusion that his attack on the causal analysis of mental concepts shows materialism false, in light of the fact that, for example, Keith Campbell does not regard arguments against the causal theory to be sufficient for rejecting materialism. My second area of concern regarding Kirk's argument reflects the fact that materialists such a J.J.C. Smart, have seemingly already argued that objecting to materialism on the grounds of the logical possibility that the theory is false misses the point.[3]

Central state materialism is the theory which analyzes the mind as a field of causes and finds reason to suppose that the causes in question are entirely physical in nature; hence, the identification of the mind with the brain (or the "physical"). Kirk's argument, in summary, is that since we can imagine an entity in the same physical state as a human and yet who lacks sentience, the materialist theory is false. Because the materialist relies upon a causal analysis of the mind, it is this part of the theory that Kirk chooses to question. His findings are that because it is possible that all the causal functions be

present and yet sentience not be present (ie. that the presence of the relevant causes does not entail sentience as the materialist claims), the materialist theory must be false.

There are two interelated aspects to the argument used by Kirk which must be given some consideration. The first concerns Keith Campbell's claim that it is not enough to argue against the causal analysis if one wants to defeat materialism; the second, that one must wonder if there is not a scientific question at stake which may have some influence upon the materialist position.

Both Campbell and Kirk argue that the causal theory of mind is inadaquate as an analysis of mind. They differ however as to what can be concluded about materialism from this fact (assuming that it is one). Kirk concludes that because of the inadaquacy of the causal analysis, materialism is false. Campbell however, who like Kirk finds the causal analysis inadaquate because it fails to account for certain features of man, argues that[4]

> central state materialism is not automatically refuted if the causal theory is inadaquate. If any property is ontically neutral, it is of course possible for a material object to have that property. So the mind can be an entirely material object even if mental states have phenomenal properties, provided the phenomenal properties are also ontically neutral. If phenomenal properties are ontically neutral, the central state materialist is not embarrassed by their existence.

The materialist, of course, does feel that such phenomenal properties are ontically neutral; his argument to this effect was given in the introduction.

It is of interest to note then that, given Campbell's view, even if Kirk's argument is granted in full, it would

seem that his generalized conclusion that materialism is false is not warranted. It may be true that the Kirkian considerations remain a thorn in the materialist's side due to the fact that they disallow the claim that the presence of the requisite causal factors entails sentience; the effect of the argument is, however, nullified. Kirk has at most disproven a part of the central state theory - an important part at that. However, central state materialism remains a possibility even if Kirk's attack on the causal theory is granted.

The causal theory is important to the materialist; one must not mistake that. Purely causal descriptions of a state are ontically neutral, thus, if the causal theory of mind was an adaquate theory for accounting for the mental,then materialism, given the appeal to Occam's razor, would virtually be "home and dry". If the causal theory was adaquate as an analysis of mind, then the mental would be entailed by the presence of the requisite causal factors. Kirk's argument shows that the mental is not entailed by the presence of the requisite causal factors. This however, while showing that the causal theory may not be adaquate, does not falsify materialism. Proving that some mental properties are not captured in the causal net does not entail that they are not still physical in nature. Thus, Kirk does not show materialism false though he may show that more work on the analysis of the mind is required before it is totally acceptable.

Kirk is therefore unwarranted in inferring from the inadaquacy

of the causal analysis to the falsehood of materialism. Keith Campbell argued, rightly it seems, that to show materialism false one must go beyond simply disproving the causal theory; one must further show that the phenomenon which the causal theory cannot account for is such that it cannot be considered as being ontically neutral. This is the motivation behind Campbell's attempt to show that "things cannot seem to a purely material system." It was argued against Campbell that his imitation man, the being on whom he pins his argument, is, because of his nature, unable to substantiate Campbell's argument - things "seemed" to this creature in a way analogous to, though different from the way things seem to man. What is of interest, however, is that Kirk's Zombie is not subject to this criticism. He is one to whom things do not "seem". The question must be put then as to whether the arguments presented by Kirk and Campbell, even though they are individually unsuccessful in disposing of materialism, can be conjoined in such a way as to constitute a disproof. Indeed, the prospect looks promising since Kirk's Zombie character can supply Campbell's argument with the one aspect it was missing - a being as complex as man but one to whom things do not "seem". Such a character then invalidates the materialist appeal to complexity as a way of accounting for the distinction between one who is sentient and one who is not.

The situation at hand is this: the Kirk-Campbell critique of materialism points out that the materialist theory cannot

account for the fact that man is sentient; that he has awareness by phenomenal properties. The causal analysis of mental concepts is inadequate. The materialist may accept this critique, however, saying that though not totally adequate the causal theory goes most of the way towards giving an analysis of the mental. Even if the causal theory is not adaquate as a complete account, this does not imply that materialism is false. The materialist still has considerations of complexity and economy upon which to base his materialism. That is, reasoning that the fact that man is more physically complex that other objects can account for the fact that man has phenomenal properties. The Kirk-Campbell presentation of a counter-example to this line, however, must cause the materialist problems. The imitation man or zombie is one as complex as man but one who is not sentient; given this possibility, the materialist appeal to complexity is negated.

Apart from stictly basing his materialist theory upon an appeal to ontological economy, that materialist has one line left open. It may be questioned whether the type of argument used by Kirk and Campbell is a valid way of attacking the materialist. It has been noted that the materialist identification of mind and body is one which is "contingent" rather than "necessary";that this is so is what gives rise to the scientific issue, the empirical discovery that the mind and the brain are one and the same entity. The question whether

the Kirk-Campbell line of argument is destructive of the materialist position depends upon the question whether the argument begs any scientific issues. In other words, is it valid to argue against the materialist's admittedly contingent identification of mind and body that it is logically possible that the two are not identical, ie. that one can be present without the other, or more specifically that it is possible for there to be present the requisite physical states without the associated mental states.

Neither Kirk nor Campbell give attention to the question of whether their method of critique is acceptable; avoiding such an issue results in their arguments being deficient in this respect. This is so not because any and every critique must justify itself on this basis but rather because J.J.C. Smart, in his original article "Sensations and Brain Processes" seems to dismiss just the sort of objections which Kirk and Campbell raise.

In replying to the hypothetical objection, "I can imagine myself turned to stone and yet having images, aches, pains and so on" Smart says,[5]

> I can imagine that the electrical theory of lightning is false, that lightning is some sort of purely optical phenomenon, I can imagine that lightning is not an electrical discharge...But it is. All the objection shows is that "experience" and "brain-process" do not have the same meaning. It does not show that an experience is not in fact a brain process.

Smart here seems to be arguing that, just as the fact that we can imagine lightning not being electrical discharge (or that,

say, we can imagine that electrical discharge might occur without the phenomena of lightning occurring) and yet still recognize that it is sensible to claim that lightning is electrical discharge, so the fact that we can imagine the mind-brain identity thesis being false (either because we can imagine being turned to stone and still having phenomenal properties such as pain, or, say, because one can imagine being as physically complex as one now is and yet not be aware of anything phenomenal) should not cut against the plausibility or sensibility of the materialist identity theory.

There are a couple of items which need noting in Smart's argument. The first thing which must be brought out is the reliance upon the analogy between the empirically discovered identities of the sciences, and the supposed identity between mind and brain. Indeed, it is from this analogy that Smart's argument draws its force. The second thing to note is that if the analogy holds, then it would seem that the arguments as presented by Campbell and Kirk are for naught. They argue on the basis of the logical possibility that the identity theory is false, more specifically that the possibility of being in the same physical state as man and yet having no mental activity is a real one and (thus) they conclude that materialism is false (or at least inadequate as a theory of mind) because it cannot account for this possibility. However, if the analogy between the mind-brain identity thesis and the identities of physical science holds, then, because of the fact that the scientific identities are

sensibly postulated and because the logical possibility of their being false does not infringe upon their theoretical adequacy, materialism cannot be dismissed on the basis of the logical possibility that its claims may be false.

As I mentioned earlier, neither Kirk nor Campbell give any consideration to the issue of the materialist identity claims being analogous to seemingly similar claims made in the theoretical sciences. However, both Saul Kripke and Thomas Nagel do realize the importance of just such claims. It is to their discussion of this issue that I now turn.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

1. Kirk, R., "Sentience and Behavior", Mind, Jan. 1974 pp. 43-60. All quotes in text denoted (SB,page)

2. See, for example, D.M. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of Mind pp. 106-107,310-312

3. In addition to the two critiques of Kirk's argument offered in the text, I believe it could also be argued that doubt could be cast on Kirk's method of argument for the reason that it may be that no philosophy of mind could pass the test which his argument represents.

The strength of Kirk's argument derives from the consideration that it is logically possible that the claimed identities do not hold. In the materialist case this means that it is possible for the physical to occur without the mental occurring. Thus, for a theory to pass the Kirkian test, the theory must be one which has the mental being necessarily identical with that with which the mental is identified. It would seem that any attempt to give an analysis or explanation (or whatever) of what the mind is, must either claim that the mind is physical or that the mind is non-physical (or that there is no such thing as the mind). It is clear that if one attempts to give a physical analysis of what the mind is, thus identifying it with something material, then one will run into just the problems that materialism does.

For the dualist to be free of Kirk's argument, he would have to argue that it is not possible for the spiritual (non-physical) substance to be in that state in which one feels pain and for one not to feel pain. However, just as Kirk's argument works against the materialist because we can imagine that we are more than our physical states, so we can imagine that we are more than our non-physical states and thereby imagine that though we possess a non-physical substance and that this substance is in a pain feeling state, we feel no pain.

It might be thought that the fact that Kirk's argument can be used for dispensing with both materialist and dualist alternatives to the mind-body problem is just that much more of a flower in Kirk's philosophical cap. However, doubt is thrown on the value of this when it is realized that Kirk's argument is also incompatible with one which has been proposed by D.C.Dennett. Dennett's theory is itself one which purports to get off the pendulum which represents traditional theories of mind by denying that the mind is a thing. Thus, given that Kirk's argument apparently obtains equally against both the materialist and the dualist - theories which represent both ends of the traditional mind-body spectrum, and given that Kirk's argument does not square with a theory which purports to break away from traditional approaches to the problem,

it must be seriously questioned whether a Kirkian type argument has any value as a critique of materialism. That Kirk's argument counters Dennett's theory can be shown in the following way.

Dennett's basic theory that the occurrance of mental phenomena need not commit one to an ontology containing mental entities leads him to an analysis of pain behavior which forces him to consider the supposition that one could be suddenly and overwhelmingly compelled to remove one's finger from a hot stove without the additional phenomenon of pain occurring. His rebuttal of such a supposed case takes the form of an apparently retorical question:

> could any sense be made of the supposition that a person might hit his thumb with a hammer and be suddenly and overwhelmingly compelled to drop the hammer, suck the thumb, dance about, shriek, moan, cry, etc. and yet still not be experiencing pain? (Content and Consciousness, London, 1969, pp. 94-95)

It should be sufficiently clear that Kirk's argument is directly counter to Dennett's supposition that such a situation does not make sense.

4. Campbell, K., Body and Mind, p 105

5. Smart, J.J.C., "Sensations and Brain Processes", p.63

CHAPTER THREE

KRIPKE ON NECESSITY AND ANALOGY

Introduction

We have seen how Kirk and Campbell attempt to set up a counter-example to the materialist thesis based on the Cartesian intuition that it is possible that one's body is in the state it is and yet for no mental events to occur. Though the attempted counter examples were found wanting, it was considered that a combination of the two arguments, eliminating the weak points in each, might be able to obtain the stated objective of showing the materialist theory of mind to be false. It was found, however, that acceptance of the Kirk-Campbell line of argument was conditional upon resolving the question of whether the materialist is warranted in claiming that his proposed identity is analogous to identities postulated in the theoretical sciences. This condition is forced by Smart's argument to this effect. If it can be shown then that the proposed materialist analogy does not hold, it would seem that the type of argument proposed by Kirk and Campbell is successful in dispensing with materialism.

Saul Kripke has proposed an argument, in "Naming and Necessity"[1], which he believes "tells heavily against the usual forms of materialism." (NN,342) The argument can be viewed as having two parts; the first reflects, in a more formalized style, the sort of argument which has been employed by Kirk and Campbell; the second is directed against the materialist

analogy with the theoretical sciences. Kripke must be given credit for noticing, as Kirk and Campbell did not, that this second part of the argument is required if one wishes to defeat the materialist enterprise.

I will deal with Kripke's argument against the materialist in the following way. I will present and discuss the first part of the argument and some of the grounds upon which it is based. This will be followed by a critical discussion of one philosopher's objections to Kripke's argument. Following the rejection of this objection I will present and discuss the second part of Kripke's argument - that which deals with the materialist's use of analogy. I will attempt to show why I do not think that Kripke's anti-materialist argument works.

Kripke's Argument: The First Part

"Naming and Necessity" is primarily geared towards the development of a linguistic theory the ramifications of which Kripke feels are inconsistent with the modern day materialist's identification of mind and body. Central to Kripke's linguistic theory are the ideas that a) certain terms function as "rigid designators", that is, they are used to pick out the same entity in all possible worlds, and b) that all true identity statements whose terms are rigid designators are necessary truths, not contingent ones. Kripke believes that the arguments he provides, based on the foregoing sorts of considerations, are enough to refute the identity theory. Before looking at these arguments, however,

it is necessary to briefly explain the meaning of the crucial terms which Kripke employs.

A term functions as a rigid designator if and only if the term picks out the same entity in all possible worlds in which that thing exists. In other words, such a term, usually a proper name or a "kind" term, picks out an object without attributing any contingent properties to it - "electrical discharge", "lightning", "heat", "molecular motion", "Clark Kent", "Superman", are all rigid designators. It is also to be pointed out for our purposes that on Kripke's view mental terms such as "pain" are rigid designators.[2] Therefore, Kripke's view runs counter to a recent movement within the philosophy of mind, spearheaded by philosophers such as D.C. Dennett, which argues that mental terms should not be considered as referential. If this is the case, then such terms should not be considered as rigid designators. Although there is much to be said for such considerations, I shall not be concerned to use them as a weapon against the Kripkian program.

"Flashes in the sky", "the cause of heat sensations", "the caped crusader" and "the mild mannered reporter" all differ from the group of terms presented in the previous paragraph in that this latter group are examples of non-rigid designators. On Kripke's analysis, the non-rigid designators, while having a close connection with the rigid designators, do not serve as an analysis of them. "Heat" does not mean "the cause of heat sensations"; "lightning" does not mean "the flashes in the sky"; and "Clark Kent" does not mean "the mild mannered reporter." Non-rigid

designators fix the reference of the rigid designator without being a part of its analysis.

Kripke's claim is that true identity statements formed with rigid designators are metaphysically necessary. If it is true that heat is molecular motion, then it is necessarily true: heat could not be other than molecular motion. Although such identities are necessary, they come to be known or discovered through empirical investigation. This is possible, Kripke explains, because we originally fix a referent by a contingent property; then, we eventually come to discover that the phenomenon, say, that phenomenon which produces the sensation of heat in us, is, in fact, molecular motion. When we have done this we have "discovered an identification which gives us an essential property of this phenomenon." (NN, 326)

Using the above cited claim regarding metaphysical necessity, Kripke presents an argument against the materialist identification of a particular sensation (or the event of having a sensation) with a particular brain state. (NN, 335). The basic argument which Kripke employs runs something like this.

1. "A" is a rigid designator for some pain-event A, and "B" is a rigid designator for the corresponding brain event B.
2. It is possible that A is not identical with B.
3. If any two terms are rigid designators, and if it is possible that they are not identical, then they are not identical.
4. Therefore, A is not identical with B. That is, the pain event

cannot be identical with the brain event.

The argument says, in effect, that if A and B are rigidly designated by "A" and "B" and if it is possible that A and B are not identical, then indeed, A and B are not identical, because if rigidly designated terms are identical then they are necessarily identical. Thus, on this reasoning, if it is logically possible that pain events are not identical with brain events, it follows that pain events cannot be identical with brain events. The argument, as stated, would certainly seem detrimental to the materialist cause. Before reaching any conclusions however, it is necessary to further investigate the operative principles upon which the argument depends.

Granting premise (3) on the basis that it represents Kripke's linguistic theory, the crucial premise in the argument appears to be (2). This premise states that it is possible that pain events should not be identical with brain events. Why does Kripke feel that premise two is true? He says,

> Prima facie, it would seem that it is at least logically possible that B should have existed (Jones's brain could have been in exactly that state at the time in question) without Jones feeling any pain at all, and thus without the presence of A. (NN,335)

Such a statement, of course, is correct; the identity here in question is not a metaphysically necessary identity even on the identity theorist's own admission. That we feel pain when a certain brain state occurs is only true, if it is true, by virtue of the "contingent laws of nature". Since the identity claim which the mind-brain identity theorist makes is based on

contingent physical laws, then it would seem that it must remain a logical possibility that the requisite brain state could occur in Jones without Jones feeling any pain.

What is also to be noted regarding this premise is that it is essentially the Cartesian consideration with which we have been dealing throughout this paper. Thus, it seems that the essential premise in Kripke's argument turns out to be based on just the sort of consideration that both Kirk and Campbell have raised.

The argument Kripke uses for support of premise (2) can be put as follows. It is possible for B, the brain event, to occur without any feeling of pain occurring. Since "A" designates the pain event A, it is possible that B should occur without A occurring. But, if it is possible that B should occur without A occurring, then it is possible that B is not identical with A. Therefore, it is possible that A is not identical with B. Thus, the second premise is secured.

Such an argument, in itself, however, will not do as a defence of the premise in question. Further, Kripke seems aware that it will not do. The problem with the defence is this: from the possibility of B occurring without any feeling of pain occurring it does not immediately follow that it is possible for B to occur without A occurring. The latter would follow only if it were the case that what is designated by "A", the pain event, was necessarily <u>felt</u> as pain. That is, for the argument to work, one must assume that the pain event A is necessarily <u>felt</u> as pain.

Kripke seems aware of the lacuna in the argument and attempts

to fill it by saying,

> the (materialist's) difficulty can hardly be evaded by arguing that...being a pain is merely a contingent property of A and that therefore the presence of B without pain does not imply the presence of B without A. (NN,335)

Kripke's reason for supposing that the materialist's difficulty cannot be evaded is given when he says,

> Can any case of essence be more obvious than the fact that being a pain is a necessary property of each pain. (NN,335)

Kripke's argument is now beginning to take shape. Being a pain, he claims, is a necessary property of each pain. Thus, one cannot argue that the presence of the pain event A does not entail the presence of pain. In other words, it is essential to being a pain that it be painful, that it be felt as a pain. This being so, the disputed premise in the defence of the original premise (2) becomes amended to read something like: "it is necessary that if A occurs, A be felt as a pain". Given this, the argument for premise two, that it is possible that A not be identical with B, is secured. From this premise the conclusion follows that pains cannot be identical with the requisite brain states.

An important point to note is that it seems that Kripke's argument relies upon the stated premise regarding pains and their being felt; it was shown above that without this premise Kripke's argument does not work. It would be subject to the telling objection that it is not valid. What comes to seem odd then is that the argument depends for its success upon a premise

which materialists need not accept and which some, Armstrong for example, have explicitely denied. Indeed, at least one philosopher, Fred Feldman,[3] has taken Kripke severely to task on just such grounds. Regarding Kripke's use of such a premise in an argument against materialism, Feldman has said, "to view the matter in this way strikes me as naive. For any serious materialist should recognize that his view entails that painfulness is never a part of the essence of a pain-event."[4]

Indeed, it would seem that most materialists must deny that pains are essentially felt pains. If mental states are nothing other than physical states of the brain then the awareness of pain, being a mental state, is a physical state. Brain states are physiological, mechanical processes and any mechanical process is fallible in that mechanical malfunction is always a possibility; therefore, it would seem that it must remain a possibility that one could have a pain and, in fact, not be aware of it or feel it. It may help to clarify the point being made to sketch D.M. Armstrong's view of the mechanical model and how it relates to the question of pains and the awareness of pains.

Armstrong presents an argument against the existence of incorrigible introspective knowledge based on the notion that our pain and our awareness of pain are "distinct existences". If the two are distinct existences, then it is logically possible that one could have a "false awareness" of pain.

The notion that our pain and our awareness of pain are distinct existences finds support through consideration of the mechanical

analogue of awareness of our own mental states. It is this consideration which is of importance to us regarding Kripke.

Armstrong describes a mechanism which becomes aware of it's inner states by a "scanning" process from which it becomes clear that the operation of scanning is distinct from that which is scanned. It is this sort of scanning mechanism model which the materialist relies on. Even in the case of (say) a spiritual substance Armstrong feels that there is no reason to think "that awareness of its own states...will differ in its logical structure from that of a self-scanning device in a mechanism."[5] While he admits that he cannot prove that there must be such a parallel, he concludes, "it seems clear that the natural view to take is that pain and awareness of pain are 'distinct existences'."[6] Thus, it would seem that even in a non-material system there is no reason to believe that one has incorrigibility guaranteed in any logical sense.

How does all this fit in with the general materialist program? The materialist wishes to identify the mind with the body, or more specifically with the brain or central nervous system. Thus, a pain, a mental phenomenon, becomes identified with, say, the stimulation of C fibres in the brain. All mental phenomena are, in fact, material processes on the materialist's view, and thus "awareness", being mental, is thus physical. The mechanical model, offered by Armstong, thus explains the awareness of pain which we experience in something like the following way. Something happens, say we burn a finger, which causes the C fibres

in the brain to become stimulated. This stimulation is, in fact, the pain which one feels accompanying the burn. It may happen, however, that I may be in pain or have a pain and yet be unaware of the pain. The pain and my being aware of the pain are distinct. My awareness is a brain process which involves a part of the brain, say A fibres, "scanning" the various states of the brain. When, in scanning, the A fibres scan activity in the C fibres, then one is aware that one is in pain. It remains a logical possibility of course, that, due to malfunction or whatever, the A fibres may not correctly scan the C fibres. Thus, activity may be "perceived" where there is none, or no activity may be "perceived" where there is some. Thus, one may be aware of pain though one is not in pain, or, one may not be aware of pain though one is in pain.

The import of all this in regards to Kripke's argument is simply that it shows that it is clear that as least some materialists do not accept the sort of move which Kripke makes, ie., claiming that pains are necessarily felt pains or that one in pain is necessarily aware of the fact. Further, philosophers such as Armstrong have argued their position. It is upon just such a fact that Feldman pins his criticisms of Kripke's argument.

It would, of course, be quite acceptable for Kripke to establish his argument through the use of a premise which his opponents do not accept if either of two conditions were met, namely, if 1) Kripke could show by argument that his opponents position entailed the premise used, or 2) he could establish the premise by argument. In the present case however, neither condition

is met. Materialism certainly does not seem to require the premise and none of its doctrines seem to entail it. In fact, quite the opposite is the case.

Further, as Feldman points out, Kripke's argument for the premise amounts to nothing more than the eliciting of apparent intuitions through the use of rhetorical questions. He asks, for example, "can any case of essence be more obvious than the fact that being a pain is a necessary property of each pain?" (NN, 335) Elsewhere he suggests that the opposite would be "self-evidently absurd." (NN, 336) It seems however, that given the argued position of Armstrong, the questioned fact can neither be obvious nor self-evident. It seems clear then that even if Kripke considers his essentialist premise as being a rock-hard statement of fact, too many others do not share his feelings. It would appear then that given the lack of reasoned argument for the position, the materialist should have little to fear from Kripke's argument as it stands. As Feldman puts it, "Aside from using rhetorical questions to elicit our agreement Kripke nowhere attempts to establish the claim that every pain is essentially a pain."[7] He concludes that, "none of this constitutes a reasoned defence of the doctrine in question."[8]

In sum, Feldman says of Kripke's use of the premise in doubt,[9]

> although Kripke steadfastly affirms the truth of 29' (the premise), he nowhere argues for it...(and) Kripke's philosophical opponents have no reason to accept 29' (it), and, in some cases at least, have meant to reject it from the outset. Thus it appears that argument H' (the argument containing the premise) turns on an undefended, controversial premise

that materialist's have, and should have rejected.

Feldman's objections to Kripke's argument are thus that: a) without the premise in question Kripke's argument does not work, b) Kripke does not defend the premise, and c) the premise is in fact denied by materialists. What seems a quite interesting fact of Feldman's argument however, is that while each of his objections may very well be correct, they do not save the materialist from what Feldman perceives to be the intent of Kripke's argument.

It would seem that the materialist distinction between "awareness of pains" and "pains", the distinction that is supposed to counter Kripke's premise that pains are essentially felt pains, must mirror a distinction in physical states such that the physical state associated with "awareness of pain" is distinct from the physical state associated with "pain"; this is confirmed by referring to Armstrong's explanation given above. Rather than free the materialist from Kripke's argument however, the drawing of such a distinction merely serves to move the argument back one step as it were. That is, Feldman, in appealing to the noted materialist distinction, appears to believe that when Kripke argues about brain states and pains he means that the brain state associated with "pain" could occur without there being any pain. If Kripke had meant only this then Feldman might have a case. However, Kripke says, when speaking of brain states, "Jones' brain could have been in exactly that state at the time in question"(NN,335) (without Jones feeling any pain). From this it is clear that "brain state" can be used to refer to the state of the entire brain

at any particular time. This being the case, then Jones' being in brain state B is consistent with his brain being in such a state that both the brain state corresponding to "pain" and the brain state corresponding to "awareness of pain" occur. Kripke's argument can thus be viewed as saying that it seems logically possible that both such brain states occur and yet one not feel the pain. In terms of Armstrong's model, it could be said that it is possible for the "A" fibres to be correctly scanning the "C" fibres and yet for pain not to be felt. This being the case, the materialist distinction, cited above and used by Feldman to object to Kripke's argument, does nothing towards establishing a flaw in Kripke's argument.[10]

Having concluded then that the first part of Kripke's argument seems unobjectionable, Feldman's insistences aside, I shall proceed to a discussion of the second part of the argument, that which concerns the materialist use of analogy. This will be introduced by pointing out another, and more serious, flaw in Feldman's critique, namely, that he has missed the point of Kripke's argument.

Kripke's Argument: The Second Part

The investigation of the first part of Kripke's argument has shown that, as it depends upon the logical possibility of a brain state occurring and yet the associated pain not occurring, it is of a type with the arguments put forth by Kirk and Campbell. It was also shown that an objection to the argument, offered by Fred Feldman, cannot be maintained. The distinction upon which the objection

depends is not, in fact, adaquate to sustain it from the type of argument Kripke presents. It can also, I think, be argued against Feldman that he misses much of the point of Kripke's attack on the materialist. Revealing how this is so will allow for a discussion of what Kripke's argument "really" is, and, I hope, of how it fails.

Feldman seems to think that Kripke's argument of the last section, if correct, would rebut materialism. That is, he seems to think that given Kripke's principle that rigidly designated identity statements are, if true, necessarily true, and the argument that the mind-brain identity is seemingly not necessarily true, then the conclusion to be derived is that the materialist claim of identity cannot be upheld. Feldman thus concentrates his efforts at trying to show that the argument depends upon an unacceptable premise. The fact is, however, that this is not Kripke's argument.

Kripke's argument is that since rigidly designated identity statements are necessarily true and since the materialist's rigidly designated statement does not seem to be necessarily true, then the materialist must either, a) be able to explain away the apparent contingency of his identity, or b) admit that the statement is not necessary. Only if (a) cannot be made out is the materialist in any trouble from Kripke's argument. Kripke says,

> Someone who wishes to maintain an identity thesis cannot simply accept the Cartesian intuitions that A can exist without B, that B can exist without A that the correlative presence of anything with mental properties is merely contingent to B, and that the correlative presence of any specific physical properties is merely contingent to A. He must explain these intuitions away, showing how they are illusory.

> This task may not be impossible; we have seen above how some things which appear to be contingent turn out on closer examination, to be necessary. The task, however, is obviously not child's play... (NN,336-337)

The last phrase in the quote refers to what I regard as the second part of Kripke's argument - the part which considers the matter of the materialist's use of analogy with the theoretical sciences.

Thus, that Feldman has missed the import of Kripke's argument can best be shown as follows. The conclusion of the argument that Feldman attacks is that A and B (the pain and brain state) are not necessarily identical. Feldman argues that this conclusion is unsubstantiated because of Kripke's reliance on a controversial premise. Let us suppose this to be so. What would Feldman have us conclude from this? It would have to be that Kripke has not shown that pains and brain processes are not necessarily identical, and thus that it may be that they are necessarily identical. But the point is that even if this be granted, then the materialist still needs to explain why the two <u>seem</u> only contingently related. Feldman has thus missed the point; even if his objection is granted the Kripkian argument obtains.

The first part of Kripke's argument corresponds to the arguments of Kirk and Campbell. It is an attempt to establish that the logical possibility that pains are not brain states poses problems for the materialist. Kripke is aware however, in a way that Kirk, Campbell and Feldman are not, that such a possibility is not, in itself, sufficient for the rejection of materialism.

Something more is required and it is this something more which Kripke tries to supply with the second part of his argument.

The fact that identity statements, if true, are necessarily true entails that if an identity statement appears to be not necessarily true, then the illusion of non-necessity should be explicable. Kripke calls the state of affairs in which necessarily true statements appear to be only contingently true the "illusion of contingency". It is thus not to be held against any proposed identity statement that it appears contingent for, as Kripke says, "some things which appear to be contingent turn out, on closer examination, to be necessary." (NN,336) What is required however, is that it be explainable why the statement appears contingent. If it is not possible to explain away the illusion of contingency which adheres to a particular identity statement, then it must be concluded that the statement contains an actual "element of contingency". If this is so, then the statement cannot be necessary and since all rigidly designated identity statements are necessary, one can only conclude that the relation of the elements in the statement in question is not one of identity.

It is now necessary to relate these considerations to the major issue that is of concern regarding Kripke's thesis, namely, his argument to show that the materialist's identity statement is not analogous to that of the theoretical sciences. Kripke's argument, briefly put, is that although both scientific identity statements and the materialist identity statement must be necessarily

true, if true, and although both have the appearance of being only contingently true, the materialist's hoped for analogy breaks down because while it is possible to explain the "illusion of contingency" with regards to the scientific statements, it is not possible to do so with the materialist's statement. The argument which reveals the disanalogy runs something as follows.

In the case of scientific identity statements, say, "lightning is electrical discharge", the sense of contingency which adheres to the statement can be explained in the following way: as Kripke puts it,

> someone could be <u>qualitatively</u> speaking, in the same epistemic situation as the original, and in such a situation a <u>qualitatively</u> analogous statement could be false. In the case of identities between two rigid designators, the strategy can be approximated by a simpler one: consider how the reference of the designators are determined; if these coincide only contingently, it is this fact which gives the original statement its illusion of contingency. (NN, 338)

These paradigms for exposing the illusion of contingency are exemplified in the following sort of case. When someone says that lightning might have turned out not to be electrical discharge the truth of the statement derives from the thought: a) that someone might have sensed lightning though electrical discharge was not present, or b) that someone might not have got the sensation of lightning when in the presence of electrical discharge. Kripke's point is that someone could be in such a situation (Kripke calls it qualitatively the same situation) and that yet this would not be a situation in which lightning was not electrical discharge (though it may seem to be; it is from this "seeming" that the statement takes on the air of contingency). What is really the

case in such a situation is that it is possible that, as in case B, someone might have been in the presence of electrical discharge and yet not sensed it as lightning, or, as in case A, someone might sense lightning when no electrical discharge is present (it could have been an optical illusion, etc.) Since, however, "lightning" does not mean "the visual sensation of a flash in the sky" (or whatever), these are not cases which show that lightning might not be electrical discharge. Lightning, at least on Kripke's account, would be electrical discharge whether we sensed it in the way we do or not. If, for example, we were aware of lightning in the way we now sense heat, this would not be a situation in which lightning was heat. Hence, the illusion of contingency regarding scientific identity statements is shown from the fact that the reference of the designator (where, say, the visual sensation is the reference of the designator "lightning") is determined contingently ("lightning" does not mean the visual sensation "L").

Having explained how it is that one might think that "electrical discharge is lightning" is contingently true, and, in so doing, having reinforced his conviction that it is really necessarily true, Kripke asks if the same can be done for the materialist's chosen identity claim. His answer is that it cannot. The reason for this is that "the identity theorist does not hold that the physical state merely produces the mental state, rather he wishes the two to be identical and thus, a fortiori necessarily co-occurant." (NN, 339) That is, molecular motion, for example, produces in us the sensation of heat, the sensation of heat is an intermediary between the external phenomenon and the observer. However,

> in the mental-physical case no such intermediary is possible, since here the physical phenomenon is supposed to be identical with the internal phenomenon itself...To be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain if one had a pain *is* to have a pain; to be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain in the absence of pain *is* not to have a pain. (NN, 339)

The problem is forced on the materialist by Kripke's reliance on the premise, discussed earlier, that to have a pain is to feel a pain and to not feel a pain is not to have a pain. The problem concerning analogy is that the aura of contingency can be explained on behalf of scientific identity statements because one can distinguish between, say, heat and the feeling of heat. However, one could not feel pain without it being the case that pain is present. Thus, given that identity is not a relation which can hold contingently between objects, the contingency which appears in the mind-brain relation must not lie in the relation between the mental and physical states (if the thesis is to be regarded as correct). Thus, it must be explained where the contingency lies. In the case of the relation of heat to molecular motion, it lies between the phenomena and the way it is apprehended. This cannot be the case with the mental because, according to Kripke, there is no such sensation or appearance beyond the mental phenomena itself; to feel pain is to have a pain.

Since then, the contingency cannot be explained in the case of the mind-brain as it can with scientific identities, Kripke concludes that "the correspondance between a brain state and a mental state[11] seems to have a certain obvious element of contingency." (NN, 341) Having such an element of contingency implies, of course,

that the relation is not one of necessity, and since all true identities are necessary, it seems that the mind-brain relation cannot be one of identity.

Contra Kripke

Kripke's argument is a powerful one; if correct it is devastating to the materialist. This is not to say, however, that the materialist has no way of replying to the argument. In light of this I would like to restate and discuss the objection that Feldman brought against Kripke and which was considered earlier.

Feldman argued that Kripke's argument depends upon a contrversial premise, ie., one that Kripke does not defend and one which the materialist does not have to accept. I argued against Feldman that his objection was for naught; the materialist's distinction fails to circumvent Kripke's argument. I also argued that Feldman seems to have missed Kripke's point in that his argument was directed against what I have called the "first part" of Kripke's argument. As such, Feldman misses what is most important in the argument.

This second criticism of Feldman's article now comes to take on a great importance for the following reason. Although the materialist distinction which Feldman relies upon does not work for Feldman, this is not, I think, because the distinction has no application to Kripke's argument, but rather because Feldman has applied it to the wrong part of the argument. The objection

raised by Feldman should be applied towards the second part of the argument. Since, as I have noted above, Kripke uses the same premise when trying to show the disanalogy between materialism and scientific identity statements as he does in the place which prompted Feldman's objection, it is clear that if there is anything to the objection, then Kripke's argument against the analogical status of the materialist statement might be effectively countered.

Briefly put, Kripke's use of the premise in the second part of the argument is shown in the following way. Since for one to feel pain is for one to have a pain and for one not to feel a pain is for one not to have a pain, then it is not possible for there to be a situation such that one could feel a pain without there being a pain actually present. However, since the possibility of just such a situation is the model on which illusion of contingency is explained for scientific identity statements, it follows that the materialist statement cannot be analogous. It cannot explain the feeling of contingency and therefore, must in fact be a contingent statement (and hence, not an identity statement).

Without giving an explicit rendering of the materialist position, as this has already been done, it needs only to be said that the materialist does not accept this glossing of mental phenomena. He claims that it is possible for one to have a pain and yet not be aware that one has a pain. It is clear that if this is the case, then the materialist is able to give an analysis of the illusion of contingency just like that of the sciences,

or, at least, so Feldman's claims would have us believe. The materialist would be able to claim that there is, indeed, an intermediary between the phenomenon and the observer, namely, the awareness of the phenomenon. Given the noted distinction, the materialist maintains that "pain" does not mean "the awareness of pain", rather, just as in the case of the scientific identities, the "awareness" fixes the reference of the term.

It is to be noted that the objection that I made to Feldman's original use of the materialist distinction is not applicable here. When used against the first part of Kripke's argument the distinction is of no avail because there it is the seeming logical possibility of the brain's being in a certain state and yet no pain occurring that is being considered; there it had to be admitted that this did seem a logical possibility and thus the use of the distinction to try to counter the possibility was wrongheaded. But here, the "seemingness" of the possibility is being explained. The difference is that here the distinction is being used to <u>explain</u> the seemingness, whereas before the distinction was used to try to counter the fact of the seeming.

It is not my intention here to delve to deeply into the muddy epistemological waters which surround the acceptance or denial of Kripke's claim that pains are essentially felt pains. It does seem however that Kripke's argument depends upon acceptance or rejection of this claim. Although I concur with Feldman's conclusion that Kripke needs to supply some argued reasoning to

support his controversial claim, it seems that the issue is too important to allow one to be contented with such a conclusion. One becomes even less contented when it is noted that although Feldman insists that the materialist need not accept any such premise as that in question he fails to supply any indication how the materialist might go about denying it. The issue becomes further complicated in that although Feldman seems to be referring to philosophers such as D.M. Armstrong in claiming that some materialists explicitely deny the premise, Armstrong himself has said, "a pain or an itch is a felt pain or felt itch, and an unfelt pain or itch is nothing."[12] This seems roughly in agreement with Kripke's premise. What Armstrong has argued is that one "can have a sensation of pain and be perfectly unaware of having it. So there can be a feeling of pain that we are unaware of feeling: unconscious pain."[13] What is not immediately clear is how this claim might act as a rebuttal of Kripke's. It is towards a brief attempt to sort out these issues, if not to make judgement upon them, that I now turn.

The materialist who wants to maintain the purported analogy with scientific statements is going to have to claim a) that pains are physical, and b) that pains are not essentially felt (in some sense). This is so because heat is physical and is not essentially felt. The problem the materialist faces is that the plausibility of claiming heat to be not essentially felt derives from the fact that one can feel heat - have a heat sensation - in the absence of heat (molecular motion). The materialist is then forced to claim, regarding pains, that one can feel pain in the absence of

pain. Kripke's intuitively plausible (albeit unsupported) claim is that the latter situation cannot obtain because to feel pain is to be in pain, is for there to be pain present. With heat, the "thing" can be distinguished from the sensation; with pain, however. the "thing" is the sensation. The materialist is thus required to make a plausible case for such a distinction.

The materialist who claims that pains are causal states and that these causal states, as it happens, are physical states of the brain may feel that he can circumvent Kripke's argument in something like the following way. He would claim that, contrary to what seems to be the case, a pain is essentially a causal state to which the feeling of pain is only contingently related. Pains, on this view, are not then essentially feelings of pain, as Kripke would have it, they are (physical) states which cause certain types of behavior. It is an entirely contingent matter that we have a feeling of pain (or any feeling at all) when we are in a pain state. The feeling is simply the way in which the physical state happens to appear to us. Such a materialist position would seem to answer Kripke's objections for it distinguishes between pain and the feeling of pain in just the way that the scientist distinguishes heat from the feeling of heat. Pain, like heat, is essentially a physical phenomena only contingently related to the sensation associated with it. Just then as Kripke explains the seeming contingency of scientific identity statements, so the materialist statement can be explained. If pain is essentially the causal state and is only contingently related to the sensation of pain, then it is possible that one could be in pain - the causal

physical state obtains - yet one not feel pain. It is possible that one might feel joy or sadness or nothing when in that state.

The problem with such a reply to the Kripkian argument is not that such a situation is impossible, inconceivable or whatever. Although it might seem somewhat counter-intuitive the position is one the materialist is free to hold (and many do). The problem with the position is that it does not adaquately dismiss Kripke's argument. His argument can be maintained in the following way.

Let us grant, a Kripkian may say, that "pain" can be distinguished from "feeling of pain" in just the way the materialist here claims. Still we are left with a "feeling of pain" which has not been explained, and it was, after all, the feeling that has been of interest all along. Presumably, the materialist is going to have to account for these "feelings" by identifying them with some physical brain state. But then, if this is the case, the materialist is going to have to call upon an analogy with the theoretical sciences in explaining this identity. At this point Kripke's argument against such an analogy comes into play all over again. In distinguishing between "pain" and the "feeling of pain" in the way he has, the materialist has not escaped the Kripkian attack, he has simply set it back one step. Merely giving the term "pain" a physical analysis will not do; the problem is with the feeling of pain.

It would seem then that simply distinguishing pain from the feeling of pain is not sufficient to counter the Kripkian argument.

In view of this, I would now like to sketch the program which I think the materialist must adopt if he is to maintain his claims for analogy. I will begin by taking a closer look at the scientific identity claims.

There seem to be a number of things involved in the formation of a scientific identity statement. Let us take as an example the claim that "lightning is electrical discharge". On observing the skies on a stormy night we may perceive a yellow-white flash. We name this yellow-white flash: "lightning". Science then investigates this phenomena and tells us that that which we perceive as a yellow-white flash and call lightning, is electrical discharge. Thus, there seem to be three components regarding the phenomena. There is the sensation (the flash); the "thing" we call lightning; and, the scientific claim as to what the thing is. For the materialist to be able to maintain his analogy with the scientific identities it would seem that he must at least be able to isolate three corresponding aspects regarding mental phenomenon. Using pain as an example these three components would be: the sensation; the "thing" we call "pain"; and the claim as to what the thing is - say, a brain state.

Using Kripke's method for explaining contingency in the scientific statements we recall that though it is not possible for there to be lightning and no electrical discharge, it is possible for there to be electrical discharge without anyone perceiving lightning (the yellow flash) and it is possible for there to be the perception of a yellow flash without there being any electrical discharge. Thus, regarding pain, it must be held

that it is not possible for there to be C fibre firings (say), without pain. What must be possible however, is that there be pain without the perception of pain, and the perception of pain without pain occurring. What is of interest here is that if "be aware of" is substituted for "perceive" such that it is possible for electrical discharge to occur without one being aware of the yellow flash, or that it is possible for a pain to occur without one being aware that the feeling is occurring, then what we have is just Armstrong's claim that the awareness or perception of pain is distinct from the pain itself. On this view then the illusion of contingency is explained by saying that one can be aware of a pain though one is not in pain or by saying that one can be in pain without being aware of it. An example of the first sort of case might be the lobotomized patients who Armstrong discusses,[14] another phenomenon which might lend itself to this sort of treatment is the seeming fact that we can know or be aware of a particular feeling without, at that time, actually experiencing the feeling. That is, it seems that if, for example, one has cut oneself at some previous time, one is often able to "feel" the feeling of pain associated with such a cut without actually being in pain at the time that one does so. The second sort of case seems to gain plausibility from the consideration that one can seemingly experience something, not be aware at the time that one has experienced it, and yet, a few moments later recall the experience.

It should be further noted that the reason the previous attempt

to supply a distinction between pains and their being felt was rejected - that it left an unexplained feeling - is not applicable here. There the attempt was to distinguish between pains and their being felt; here it is admitted that pains are felt. Further, that which is left in the second case, the awareness of pains, corresponds to the awareness of lightning in the scientific case. Thus, even if there is an unexplained something left, this is seemingly also the case in the scientific reduction. As such, a case for disanalogy cannot be made out on that basis.

My purpose in the preceeding was not to attempt to determine who is actually right about the controversial premise. Rather, my attempt was simply to give substance to the view, expressed originally by Feldman, that Kripke does in fact need to present some argument for his controversial premise, and to supply the way in which Armstrong's arguments might be relevant to the matter. It seems then that Kripke is in dire need of some argument if he wishes to maintain his claim that the materialist's identity claims are not analogous to those of the theoretical sciences.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

1. Kripke, Saul, "Naming and Necessity", in Harman and Davidson (Eds.) Semantics and Natural Language, 1971. All references to this work denoted in text as (NN,page).

2. It would be more accurate, I suppose, to say that in his argument "pain" functions as a rigid designator. It is not clear whether Kripke himself holds such a view or whether he is simply supposing this in order to meet the materialist on his own grounds.

3. Feldman, Fred, "Kripke on the Identity Theory", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 71, 1974, pp. 663-676.

4. Feldman, F., ibid. p. 675

5. Armstrong, D. M., A Materialist Theory of the Mind, London 1971, p. 107

6. Armstrong, D. M., ibid.

7. Feldman, F., op cite, p. 675

8. Feldman, F., ibid.

9. Feldman, F., ibid., p. 676

10. If one were to object that it is not obvious that this is consistent with Kripke's use of the argument, I would accept this and state that the making of a small revision to Kripke's argument is enough to do away with Feldman's objection.

11. The text reads, "physical state" which, I assume, is a misprint.

12. Armstrong, D.M., A Materialist Theory of the Mind, p. 311

13. Armstrong, D.M., ibid, p. 312

14. Armstrong, D.M., ibid, p. 313

CHAPTER FOUR

NAGEL ON BATS

Introduction

I would now like to consider the most recent and possibly most interesting attempt to develop the line of argument with which I have been dealing. This final attempt at discrediting the materialist's position is found in Thomas Nagel's article, "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?"[1] Nagel holds, along with Kirk and Campbell, that the materialist analysis of the mental leaves something out, and that the materialist use of analogy with the sciences to provide support for his position is an illicit one. Basically, Nagel's view is that the fact of consciousness renders the mind-body identity unique, so much so that consideration of the theoretical identities or reductions in the sciences yields us no understanding of the materialist thesis. Before turning attention to the reasons behind his view, two points must be briefly noted.

In making the claim that it is the fact of consciousness which renders the mind-body identity unique, Nagel shows his adherence to the sort of view explicated by Kirk and Campbell. Critical attention is focused on the materialist claim that it is sensible to speak of conscious experience as being physical in nature. Nagel, like Kirk and Campbell, is concerned to show that there is something about consciousness which makes it such that a physical account cannot be the whole account. In this regard Nagel says,

> If physicalism is to be defended, the phenomenological features (of experience) must themselves be given a physical account. But when we examine their subjective character it seems that such a result is impossible. (B,437)

Any attempted analysis of the subjective character of experience, maintains Nagel, fails to be exhaustive:

> It is not analyzable in terms of any explanatory system of functional states, or intentional states... It is not analyzable in terms of the causal role of experience in relation to typical human behavior. (B, 436)

The reason Nagel cites for this is that "these could be ascribed to robots or automata that behaved like people though experienced nothing."(B, 436) The reference here to just the sort of case developed by Campbell and Kirk should not need explanation.

One other point, one which may have serious ramifications, must be made. It will be recalled that the Kirk-Campbell argument, if it is to be successful, is in need of a further argument to show that the identity of mind and body is not analogous to scientific identities. Nagel does claim to show that the identity of mind and body is not analogous to scientific identities; however, he does not feel that his argument is adequate to falsify materialism. Reflecting on the considerations that he presents, he says, "It would be a mistake to conclude that physicalism must be false...It would be truer to say that physicalism is a position we cannot understand." (B, 446)

Nagel acknowledges the use of analogy from the modern sciences as a possible way of lending plausibility to the materialist's claims. He feels, however, that it is "most unlikely that any of these unrelated examples of successful reduction will

shed light on the relation of mind to brain" (B, 435) Nagel's interest is to try to show why this is so: to show

> why the usual examples do not help us to understand the relation between mind and body - why, indeed, we have at present no conception of what an explanation of the physical nature of a mental phenomenon would be. (B, 435-6)

As was mentioned earlier, Nagel believes that consciousness is at bottom responsible for the unique difficulties in defending mind-brain identities. A brief gloss of what Nagel means by "consciousness" is given when he says, "fundamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism - something it is like for the organism." (B,436) These conditions for the ascription of consciousness are also termed, by Nagel, the "subjective character of experience." Nagel insists that it is this subjective character of experience which is left out of the materialist analysis of the mind, and which cannot be supplied by considering analogies from the sciences.

Nagel's general argument undermines the materialist's use of the "appearance-reality" distinction. In the sciences, what we perceive, or rather, the phenomenon as perceived by us, is relegated to the realm of appearance over and against which what science tells us of the object perceived is regarded as the real nature of the object. Thus, lightning, which is really a discharge of electrons, appears to us as a yellow-white flash in the sky. As has been previously noted, the materialist claim is that just as lightning is an appearance, so mental events such as pain are

appearances; the pain is really a brain state. It is against this use of the scientific model that Nagel's argument is directed.

Nagel's argument may be broken into two parts. The first part is an attempt to show why the physicalist cannot account for the subjective character of experience; the second deals with the relationship (which the materialist claims is analogous) between scientific identities and the mind-body claim. The two arguments are related in the following way: Nagel wants to first show that the materialist thesis is not understandable. This is the function of his first argument. He then wants to show that consideration of the scientific model does nothing towards aiding the understanding. Thus the two arguments, if correct, would show that the physicalist theory itself is not understandable and that appealing to the sciences for help is of no avail. As was pointed out earlier, Nagel is arguing for the conclusion that the materialist thesis is not understandable and that using the model of scientific reduction does not aid understanding because consciousness does not fit the model of the sciences. For my purpose, it matters not whether the materialist thesis is or is not understandable. What is of importance is to determine whether, if Nagel is correct about understandability, the supposed disanalogy in any functions to support non-understandability. In other words, it matters not whether the materialist's thesis, in fact, is not understandable, and it matters not whether the materialist's using the scientific model does not aid understanding. What does matter, for our purposes, is whether the scientific model does not aid understanding <u>because</u> of disanalogy, because the models are not

compatible.

As Nagel's first argument acts as something of a background to the development of his more important second argument, I shall give a brief outline and discussion of it before proceeding to explicitely consider the matter of analogy.

Argument One

Nagel's first argument is an attempt to show that the physicalist theory itself is not understandable. In order to be understandable it would have to be that nothing was "left out" in the reduction of mental to physical. "If the analysis leaves something out, the problem will be falsely posed." (B, 437) This means that materialism must be able to "deal explicitely" with what Nagel has referred to as the subjective character of experience, but "there is no reason to suppose that a reduction which seems plausible when no attempt is made to account for consciousness can be extended to include consciousness."(B, 437) If physicalism is to be defended then, claims Nagel, "the phenomenological features must themselves be given a physical account." (B, 437) Given that these phenomenological features have a subjective character, the problem that arises for the materialist can be expressed in the following argument. The subjective is only accessible from one point of view; the physical, being the realm of objective facts, is acessible from many points of view; therefore, since it is a mystery (if not an impossibility) how that which is accessible only to one point of view could be revealed by that which is accessible to many points of view, it is a mystery how the subjective could be revealed by the objective

or how the subjective character of experience could be revealed in the physical operations of an organism. Therefore, it would seem that consciousness, the subjective character of experience, cannot be accounted for by the physicalist program. The materialist tries to make a claim that we cannot understand because of the "mystery" involved.

To understand the argument it is necessary to know to what Nagel refers by "point of view". In conveying the notion of a single point of view, Nagel asks us to imagine a bat or other such creature whom we are to conceive as a conscious being, where being conscious means that "there is something that it is like to be that organism - something it is like for the organism." Whether such a glossing of consciousness is adequate or not is, I suppose, debatable. However, let us accept it at least for the sake of argument. We are to assume then that bats, Martians, and the like, are conscious - that there is something it is like to be such an organism; however, due to the fact that bats, for example, perceive the world via considerably different perceptual apparatus than ourselves, we are to note that it becomes impossible for us, being human, to imagine or conceive what it is like to be a bat. We are unable to experience things in the way a bat does, so, we are unable to conceive of what it would be like to be such a creature. We may be able to know how the bat perceives, ie., through the use of some type of sonar apparatus, yet we are unable to imagine what the bat's subjective experience of this sonar is like. This indicates that the facts of the bat's experience - what

it is like to be a bat - are not accessible from the human viewpoint. They are only accessible from the viewpoint of the bat, or an organism sufficiently similar to the bat. The situation for humans is the same. Although we may lack the necessary vocabulary to explicitely state it, we may say that we know what it is like to be us. A martian however, being an organism of considerably different make up, may not be able to conceive of what it is like to be a human. In this case, one would say that the facts of human consciousness - the subjective character of experience - are accessible only from the human viewpoint - from one point of view.

In contrast with the subjective, the physical operation of an organism, according to Nagel is the "domain of objective facts par excellence." That is, they are "the kind that can be observed and understood from many points of view and by individuals with different perceptual systems." (B, 442) The phenomenon of lightning, for example, can be understood from many points of view, although it may be that the visual phenomenon of a flash in the sky is peculiar to humans. The scientific reduction is a reduction of the phenomenon from a peculiarly human viewpoint to one which could be understood from many viewpoints. In such cases of successful reduction,

> we leave behind one viewpoint to take up another... Members of radically different species may both understand the same physical events in objective terms, and this does not require that they understand the phenomenal forms in which these events appear to the senses of members of other species. (B, 445)

A physicalist account deals with man as being a totally physical being. As such, physicalism entails that its account of man and thus of consciousness must be objective. Its being objective entails that the account is amenable to understanding from many points of view.

The two positions outlined in the form of premises in Nagel's argument appear, and Nagel naturally thinks that they are, incompatible with each other. The situation is that the facts of the subjective experience are only accessible from one point of view, but physicalism entails that all facts are accessible to many points of view. Thus, it remains a mystery how the subjective character of the experience could be revealed by physicalism with its necessarily objective viewpoint.

As I pointed out above, it really matters not whether Nagel has been successful in showing the physicalist enterprise to be one which is non-understandable in nature. Nonetheless, I think it may be of some interest to note that even this matter may not be quite as clear-cut as Nagel seems to think. I would like to raise a couple of points which, even if they do not show that Nagel is wrong in thinking that physicalism is not understandable at least cast some doubt on supposing the theory to be non-understandable for the reasons that he advances.

Nagel's objection to physicalism is that the physicalist must employ the objective, and the objective cannot capture the character of the subjective. This objection rests on the assumption that the physicalist must give a physical account of the subjective phenomenological experiences. As Nagel says, "if

physicalism is to be defended, the phenomenological features must themselves be given a physical account." (B, 437)

In the physical sciences, the cases of successful reduction depend upon characterizing the thing reduced as an "appearance" of the objective phenomenon. The phenomenon reduced is then explained as the effect that the thing has on the mind or percertual apparatus of the observer. In giving the scientific explanation the thing to be reduced, the appearance, is in effect excluded from the reduction. Materialists have, in general, adopted this sort of strategy in dealing with the subjective experiences of consciousness. Nagel's claim, however, is that one cannot explain the phenomenolgical features as appearances because doing this entails that the phenomenological would be excluded from the reduction just as the phenomenal is excluded from scientific reductions. If the subjective character is left out of the reduction then the question of the relation between mind and body is falsely posed. There is no reason to suppose that a reduction which seems plausible when consciousness is excluded can be validly extended to include consciousness. Thus, if physicalism is to be defended the phenomenological features themselves must be given a physical account.

It would seem then that if the phenomenological features are not given a physical account, physicalism is leaving something out of its analysis of the mental, and, if the features are explained as appearances, then they are not being given a physical account. Therefore, explaining the subjective as an appearance entails leaving something out of the physicalist account and

thus the question of the relation is falsely posed.

It would seem, however, that such an argument simply may show a lack of understanding of the materialist position. The physicalist's point in assigning the phenomenal to the realm of appearance is that doing so renders the phenomenon ontically neutral. That is, from the fact that an X is merely an appearance one can suppose nothing towards the ontological status of the X. (At least, this is what the materialist argues.)[2] Thus, in the case in hand, the fact that the mental takes on the status of appearance means that one remains non-commital as to whether the phenomenon is material or, say, non-physical. Its being an appearance entails that it could be either. From this point the materialist brings to bear arguments concerning ontological economy, or as it is often referred to, Occam's Razor. Roughly, these considerations state that unless there is sufficient reason to suppose otherwise an object or phenomenon should, in the interest of ontological economy, be considered physical. As Brian Medlin puts it, "once the general (causal) theory is accepted, then we cannot claim that mental conditions are non-physical unless we have some good reason to do so."[3]

It is not clear then that the physicalist needs to give a complete physical account of the subjective features of consciousness in the way that Nagel supposes. The physicalist hypothesis stands firm even without such an explanation when it is realized that his argument is one which a) uses Occamist consideration to show that such features should be dealt with as if

physical and b) appeals to the future scientific investigations to reveal more completely the nature of the identity between mind and brain.

The materialist usually attempts to give an explanation of certain mental phenomena in physical terms - usually some sort of causal analysis. Nagel may be correct if it were the case that the materialist was required to give a complete account of all mental phenomenon along such lines. The appeal to appearance however, involving as it does topic neutrality and the use of Occamist argument, is invoked to deal with any phenomenon which does not admit of a causal analysis. Given then that the materialist has use of both methods of explanation it would seem that Nagel's charges that he must give a physical explanation of all phenomena miss the mark. The appeal to appearances, while it does not pretend to give an analysis of the mental, does give reason to suppose that we should consider such phenomena as physical. What Nagel's argument seems to be lacking then is a reason to suppose that the materialist cannot use the appeal to appearances. Later, when dealing with the question of analogy, this issue will come to light again.

It will be recalled that Nagel's argument was presented to show that physicalist doctrine, because necessarily objective, could not account for the subjective. The physicalist must speak in objective terms, ie., terms which are in principle understandable to all regardless of viewpoint. From thus pointing out the difference between the objective realm and the subjective realm it was concluded

that physicalist theory could not reveal the nature of the subjective.

The materialist, however, may not be without reply to this argument. He might argue that Nagel's objection is not just an objection against physicalism, but is an objection to any theory of mind. The reasoning behind such a reply could stem from the following considerations. It must be admitted that all language is public or intersubjective - it must be considered so to account for the fact that we are able to communicate with others by using a language. Being public means that the language is understandable to different people. Being understandable in this sense means, in effect, that all language is objective. Therefore, it would seem that no theory or philosophy of mind could reveal the character of the subjective because any such theory must be offered in a language and thus be couched in terms of the objective. Thus, if the objective, of necessity, excludes the subjective, then any philosophy of mind must exclude the subjective; no philosophy of mind could reveal it.

Although he does not explicitly say so, I think Nagel foresees this sort of objection. He says,

> I am not adverting here to the alleged privacy of experience to its possessor. The point of view in question is not one accessible only to a single individual. Rather it is a type...there is a sense in which phenomenological facts are perfectly objective: one person can know or say of another what the quality of the others experience is. They are subjective, however, in the sense that even this objective ascription of experience is possible only for someone sufficiently similar to the object of ascription to be able to adopt his point of view. (B, 442)

In other words, the supposed materialist response that since all language is objective the subjective is not capable of being captured in any language is countered by Nagel's claim that "subjective" does not refer to the private experience of any one individual. Subjective experiences are objective within the community of relevantly similar individuals. This being the case, the subjective can be expressed in language.

But, it would still seem open to the materialist to counter-argue that talk of subjective types of experience is unwarranted. Each experience is unique for each individual. The translation of such experiences into the generalities of language necessarily excludes the uniqueness of the experience. Exclusion of the uniqueness means, in effect, exclusion of the subjective character of the experience, for it is this character which is the unique factor of the experience. (That each subjective experience is unique means that each particular experience differs from others. The pain of burning a hand on a stove is qualitatively different from being cut with a knife and even burning oneself twice on a stove does not entail that experiences be qualitatively the same. Thus if each experience is unique, even sensation language is a generalization. Therefore, it misses the true subjective character of the experience.) Thus, the materialist could argue that since no theory can account for the subjectivity of experience anyway, the fact that the materialist theory suffers this deficiency should not be used against it.

Even if the skeptical position such as the materialist might

argue is not viable, and even supposing that the phenomenology of experience is such that it is objective in the way Nagel indicates, one must be cautious as to what this means. If subjective experiences are objective in the manner in which Nagel indicates, then there would appear to be no bar to physicalist language "revealing" just as much of the subjective as does the now subjective talk of sensations and the like. This would be so at least as communication is limited to the inter-species level. That is, since sensation talk is inter-species objective anyway, Nagel presents us with no reason to believe that physicalist talk could not replace sensation talk on the relevant species specific level. If this is so, then it would seem that the only relevant problem raised by Nagel is that sensation talk is objective only within a species while physicalist talk is objective across various species. Thus, the problem is this: sensation talk, because species relative, could not be understood by a martian; however, physicalist talk could be understood by such a being. Thus, on the physicalist account, a martian who has no idea of our subjective experiences would be able to understand the language used to describe those experiences. The oddity in this would seem to indicate that the physicalist language does not account for, or "leaves out" our subjective experiences. In other words, a martian could use our physicalist language without knowing fully what he was talking about. In talking of, say, C fibre firings he would not know he was talking about what we feel as pain.

But one must wonder if it is the case that sensation talk

could not be understood by the Martian. A blind person is in a relevantly similar situation to the Martian. A blind person does not have a perceptual apparatus which most of us have, thus a blind person does not have color sensations as we do. Nonetheless the blind person does and is able to use color sensation terminology. Since the blind person and the martian both differ from us in that the perceptual apparatus and the subjective experiences differ, and since the blind person is nonetheless able to use the relevant sensation language, there would appear to be no conceptual bar to a martian using sensation language. There still remains the problem that the Martian could not fully understand just as the blind person does not. But this is not the point. If the martian could use either language, (whether he fully understands or not) it shows the problem to be with language in general and not with the physicalist language in particular. That is, if, as it seems, any language can be used without being fully understood and if, as was noted above, Nagel's claim comes down to the assertion that the martian could use physicalist language without fully understanding what he was talking about, then it would appear that the use of physicalist language should present no more problem than does any other language. Thus, it seems that Nagel's objection to physicalism - that the difference between the objective and the subjective is such that physicalist language is incompatible with the subjective aspect of experience - presents no more problem to physicalism than it would to any theory which uses a language of any sort.

The Second Argument

The first part of Nagel's total argument was an attempt to show why it is that all physicalist analysis of the mental must miss the mark. Basically what Nagel has proposed is that the difference between the objective and the subjective is such that the objective, which is exemplified in the physical, is, by its nature, unable to reveal the nature of the subjective. Thus, materialism which depends upon an objective analysis, is unable to account for that which is subjective in nature and as such is unable to reveal the nature of consciousness. The conclusion to be drawn, according to Nagel, is that the physicalist hypothesis must be non-understandable. Believing that he has then shown the physicalist hypthesis itself to be non-understandable, Nagel turns his attention to the matter of the materialist assertion that the mind-body identity claim is analogous to scientific identity statements. Nagel's concern is to show that consideration of the scientific type identities does not aid us in understanding the physicalist hypothesis. My concern with Nagel's argument is not as to whether the supposed analogy does or does not aid the understanding. Rather, my concern is as to whether Nagel's claim - that the analogy does not aid the understanding <u>because</u> the materialist claim does not fit the model of the sciences - can be maintained.

In very general terms the model of scientific reduction can be stated in the following way. The scientific reduction is a reduction from "appearance" to "reality". Physical phenomena

are apprehended by us through our sense organs, so, the information presented by our sense organs constitutes how a particular phenomenon appears to us. Scientific investigation, however, has shown us that how an object so appears to us does not necessarily indicate what the "real" make up of the object may be. Thus, while we are aware of lightning as the presentation of a visual appearance of a yellow flash, science is able to tell more about the phenomenon than only how it appears. In addition to the subjective appearance of lightning, science informs us of the objective character of the phenomenon, ie. that lightning is electrical discharge.

Nagel claims that the nature of the scientific reduction of appearance to its objective character is justified by the fact that science deals with things which, by nature, are more objective than is revealed to us in appearance. He says, for example, "lightning has an objective character that is not exhausted by its visual appearance"(B, 443); it is this objective character which defines the domain of the sciences. In other words, scientific reduction is a method by which we can leave behind the subjective, single point of view, and take up a point of view which is objective, that is, which is accessible from many points of view, one which does not depend upon, in our case, human perceptual abilities. This is so because the objects dealt with by the sciences are such that they are, in fact, external to the point of view from which they are observable. Thus,

> A martian scientist with no understanding of visual perception could understand the rainbow, or lightning or clouds as physical phenomena, though he would never be able to understand the human concepts of rainbow

> lightning, or cloud, or the place these occupy in our phenomenal world. (B, 443)

But, experience itself, claims Nagel, does not seem to fit the pattern exemplified in various scientific reductions. With experience "the connection with a particular point of view seems much closer." (B, 443) The fact is, says Nagel,

> the idea of moving from appearance to reality seems to make no sense here...Certainly it appears unlikely that we will get closer to the real nature of human experience by leaving behind the particularity of our human point of view and striving for a description in terms accessible to beings that could not imagine what it was like to be us. If the subjective character of experience is fully comprehensible only from one point of view, then any shift to greater objectivity- that is, less attachment to a specific viewpoint - does not take us nearer to the real nature of the phenomenon: it takes us farther away from it. (B, 444)

It is to be admitted that the results Nagel finds when comparing the physical hypothesis to the scientific model contains a degree of initial plausibility. It seems correct to say that if the character of experience is subjective, which means accessible from one point of view, then a reduction to the objective, to that which is accessible from many points of view, must necessarily miss something. Such a reduction of the subjective to the objective must necessarily take one farther away from the subjective. Nagel is arguing that the nature of the phenomena dealt with by the materialist is such that it does not lend itself to reduction in the way scientific phenomena does. His argument is not that the materialist has actually set up his reduction differently than scientific reductions (for the model is, indeed, the same). The claim is that the nature of the phenomenon itself

entails that the proposed model cannot be used.

The assumption used (it is nowhere argued for) to support the claim that the nature of the phenomenon does not permit reduction is that while the objects of science are essentially objective in nature, consciousness is essentially subjective. In other words, since consciousness is essentially subjective, and since the scientific model of reduction excludes the subjective, then in following the model of the sciences the materialist must necessarily exclude consciousness; he must exclude that which he is trying to explain.

What seems apparent is that the materialist must reject Nagel's assumption that consciousness is essentially subjective. One way to do this would be to give a complete physical account of the mental phenomenon. Nagel will of course argue that this cannot be done. But, here we are back at the same point that was discussed a few pages ago; for, the materialist will reply that if he cannot give a complete physical account, and is thus left with appearances, then he will simply invoke the topic neutral strategy in conjunction with the appeal to ontological economy, to show that these appearances should be treated as physical. The topic neutral strategy is one which admits that (at least some) mental terms cannot be given a physical analysis but which claims that even so these terms should be considered as referring to things physical.

Nagel's argument may show why physicalism is, at present, not understandable. He has not, however, supplied reason for supposing that the materialist analogy does not work. For this to be the case

Nagel needs the assumption that consciousness is essentially subjective, an assumption that develops from the thought that the materialist must give a physical account of consciousness, but cannot. It seems no less than traditional materialist theory however, that that which cannot be analyzed in terms of the physical can be accounted for as physical through the appeal to topic neutrality and ontological economy. It appears then that Nagel has done no more than to show the extent to which materialism is dependent upon such concepts. For his argument to be made out then, Nagel requires some further argument to the effect that these concepts are not sufficient for the materialist purpose. I do not claim that this cannot be done, only that, for Nagel's argument (and by a lengthy chain of implication the arguments of Kirk and Campbell) to succeed, it needs to be done.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1. Nagel, Thomas, "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?", Philosophical Review, Oct. 1974, pp. 435-450. Denoted in text as (B, Page).

2. This refers to the sort of arguments presented by Medlin and Campbell and which have already been discussed.

3. Medlin, B., "Ryle and the Mechanical Hypothesis", in Presley (Ed.) The Identity Theory of Mind, 1967, p. 97.

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